

Report says secret agents held inadequate inquiry while Government misled Parliament

MI6 failed to relay information on Iraqi supergun

BY CAROL MIDDLEY

THE Secret Intelligence Service, MI6, failed to pass on information that large metal tubes produced by a Midlands manufacturer were probably intended for use in the Iraqi supergun project, the Scott report says.

MI6 knew as early as June 1988 that the tubes, made by Midlands-based Walter Somers, might be used as artillery gun barrels. In what Sir Richard Scott described as a "serious omission", this was not relayed to the Restricted Enforcement Unit — a committee made up of representatives from Customs and Excise, intelligence agencies, and Whitehall departments to monitor arms exports guidelines.

He concluded that MI6's investigation into the Iraqi supergun project was "inadequate" and its report "misleading". Sir Richard stressed that if the Walter Somers information had been properly communicated, the involvement of British companies in the supergun project would have been known by November 1989, at the latest.

But he said there was evidence to suggest government officials suspected an "Iraqi long-range artillery project with unusual features" might be under way before 1989 anyway. The report said: "In

the event, there is clear evidence that, some time before October 1989, government officials had had information which raised suspicion that Walter Somers' tubes were intended for use as artillery gun barrels.

"Parliament could, and should, have been told this; the Trade and Industry Select Committee could, and should have been told this," Sir Richard accused the Government of misleading Parliament and failing to discharge its obligations of accountability to Parliament.

Nicholas Ridley, at the time

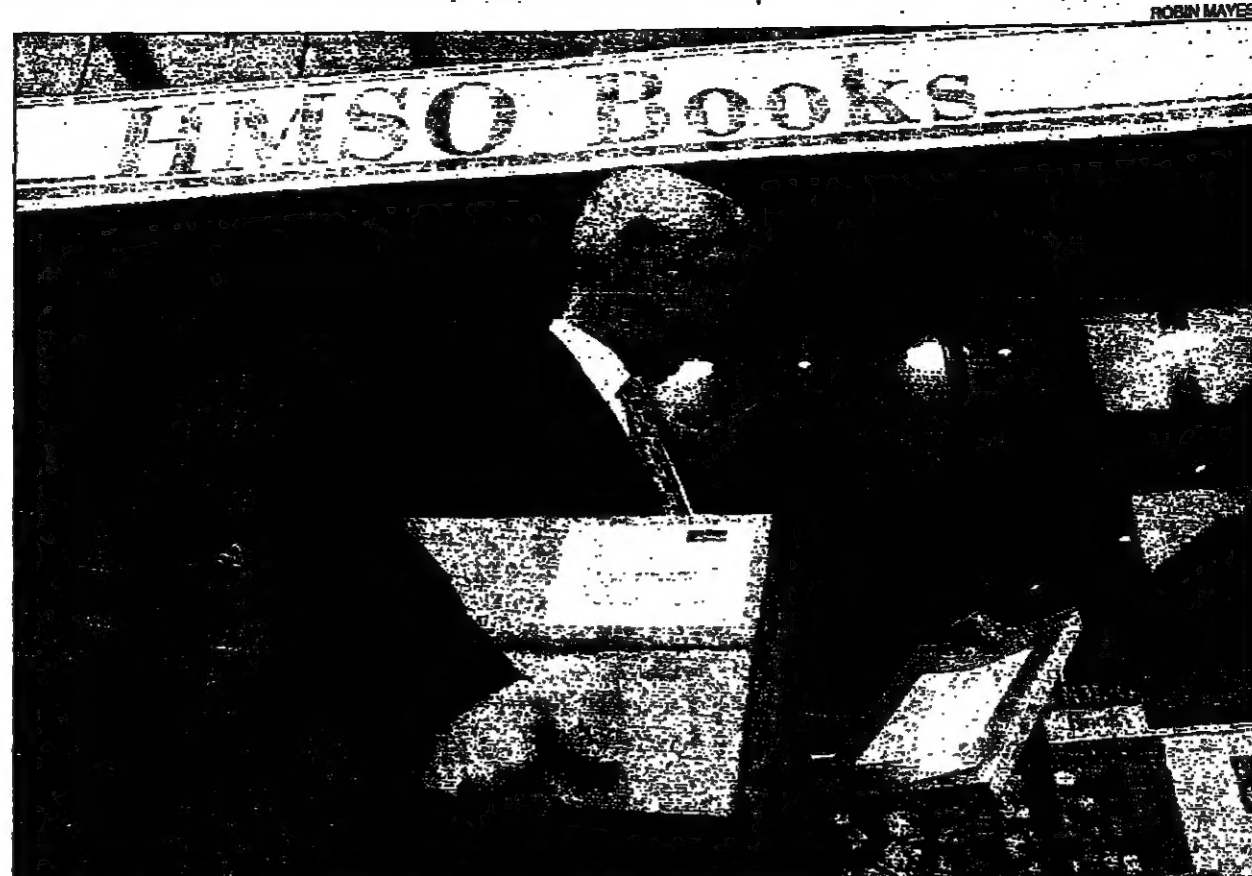
the Government for not having acted sooner than it did," the report said. "It is in my opinion clear that the world 'recently' was deliberately chosen and that its use was apt to be misleading."

Sir Richard said the inquiry had "disclosed a failure on a number of occasions for proper use to be made of available intelligence." Within the Defence Intelligence Staff, the report said, there was a failure to ensure that relevant intelligence received was brought to the attention of the "Defence Sales" desk. "Within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Trade export licensing unit there were periods when the relevant official was unable to read intelligence reports because he had not yet received the requisite security clearance."

Sir Richard identified three intelligence reports — dated January 12, September 5 and October 6, 1989 — which did not reach the Defence Sales desk because of failures in the distribution system. The report referred to a problem with submissions to Ministers by the Middle East department regarding "opinions on intelligence matters said to be held by the Secret Intelligence Service."

It went on to list eight examples, including deliberate non-disclosure of the existence of the Howe Guidelines on defence sales to Iran and Iraq, and answers to MPs' questions that represented "a deliberate concealment from Parliament."

Sir Richard said a failure to meet the obligations of ministerial accountability by providing information about the activities of departments undermined the democratic process. The report urged a comprehensive review of the practice whereby information about arms and defence-related exports need not be given by Ministers.



Paul Henderson outside the Stationery Office shop in Birmingham yesterday with his copy of the Scott report

Trial collapse blamed on feeble investigation by customs officers

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE collapsed Matrix Churchill trial that precipitated the Scott inquiry should never have taken place, Sir Richard Scott says in his report.

Three senior executives of the Midlands company were charged by Customs with exporting large quantities of machine tools to Iraq in breach of government restrictions.

Their defence was that the Government knew what they had been doing and that Alan Clark, the Trade and Industry Minister, had "encouraged" them to continue trading, indicating with "nods and winks" that government guidelines had been relaxed.

In his report, Sir Richard says the customs investigation of those charged was, in his opinion, "inadequate," customs officers ought to have investigated "more rigorously" what Mr Clark told the businessmen at the meeting.

"The interview with Mr Clark that preceded the preparation of his witness statement... was neither rigorous nor searching," the report says. By the time it took place, the decision to prosecute had been taken.

Paul Henderson, the former chief executive of Matrix Churchill, smiled as he bought his £45 copy of the report at the HMSO shop in Birmingham yesterday. He said: "It has been a long wait and I'm glad to get this in my hands. This chapter in my life hasn't closed until today."

He said that he hoped the end of the inquiry would allow normality back into his life, but added: "I'll be studying the report, then I'll decide what action I shall take. I hope the workers won't be forgotten. I think they will fight and if I can do anything to help them fight I will. It has been very stressful," Trevor

Abraham, a former director of the company and defendant, said he was pleased the report had concluded that the prosecution should not have been brought. "It vindicates the view that we expressed from the very first day of our arrest," he said.

"There is a feeling that maybe the whole matter was just a television sitcom called Yes, Minister because no one seems to accept responsibility for all the doublepeak that clearly has gone on within Whitehall," Mr Abraham said that the Government should bear some responsibility for the people who lost their jobs as a result of the trial, but he believed ministers were "clinging on."

Former Matrix Churchill workers spoke of their anger at the report and called the inquiry a whitewash. Phil Harris, 53, the spokesman for

650 former employees at the Coventry factory, which closed in November 1992, said: "We are not going to lay down and die. This is only just the beginning for us. We are going to investigate whether there will be compensation."

Sir Richard says the protestations that the defendants had been "encouraged" by Mr Clark was "never taken seriously." Customs investigation of the defendants' claim that the Government knew what Matrix Churchill was doing was "inadequate" because the investigators did not believe it.

They made no attempt to Presidential Ministers or official results a Defence Ministry. Sir Richard said he had life for the dis in decisions to redistribute exports. Sir Richard said a lot of relevant documents, especially intelligence reports, had been identified by Customs and taken into account, "prosecution would not have commenced."

Sighs of relief but some doubts remain

BY JILL SHERMAN

TORY MPs appeared to give the benefit of the doubt to William Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas Lyell last night although some said they would reserve their judgment until they had fully digested the report.

MPs rallied around the Government shortly after being handed a crib sheet by Conservative Central Office on what their response should be on certain sensitive issues. But it was clear that many were uneasy about some of Sir Richard Scott's conclusions.

Some conceded that the Government would have had a much tougher time from its own backbenchers if an election had not been so near. "A year ago this would have been deeply damaging to the Prime Minister," one senior backbencher said. "But with the general election in the offing it is all too close now."

Many were relieved that the report had not been more critical of ministers and had cleared them of both conspiracy and knowingly risking innocent men going to jail. However, a backbencher who has threatened to rebel when the report is debated in ten days' time said: "There are a lot of things short of conspiracy which would be totally unacceptable. I will reserve judgment on how I will vote until next week."

Other backbenchers said they were worried that Sir Richard Scott had been highly critical about ministers' action and their failure to take responsibility for them.

Richard Shepherd, MP for Aldridge-Brownhills, was one of the few MPs to publicly criticise the Government. He gave no indication how he would vote in the debate but made clear that he was unhappy with ministers' behaviour.

"What is the point of parliamentary democracy if ministers deliberately fail to answer parliamentary questions because they fear public opposition?" he asked.

The executive of the 1922 backbench committee met shortly after Sir Richard's statement and agreed that the position of the ministers was secure for the moment. It is understood that some members of the executive, however, were worried that on closer reading of the report other issues might emerge. Mr Lang has been invited to address the committee next Thursday.

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, a vice-chairman of the 1922 Committee, said: "I am delighted for the sake of the honour of our parliamentary system that there was no question of any ministers seeking to let innocent men go to jail, nor was there any question of deliberate deception."

Supporters of William Waldegrave, were confident that he would survive. "The report shows that he acted in good faith," said Ian Taylor, junior minister for Trade and Industry and a former parliamentary private secretary to Mr Waldegrave.

Allies of Sir Nicholas Lyell gave a robust defence of the Attorney-General's failure to tell the court personally about Mr Heseltine's criticism of immunity certificates. The information was relayed via officials, they said.



UN inspectors examine the Iraqi supergun in 1991

Scott coy Major stands by ministers in arms-to-Iraq row

Continued from page 1

tion that we should read the report — a little rich given that journalists had only had the five volume document in our hands for 45 minutes and the judge himself had complained about the lack of earlier access for MPs and the media.

One question was dismissed with "when did you stop beating your wife." Asked if anyone should "carry the can," Sir Richard said it was a convenient phrase, but wondered what it meant.

Only once was the urbane, smiling Sir Richard lost for words. When told by an over-enthusiastic journalist that "the entire world" was listening to his words, even beneath the naturally ruddy complexion of a hunting man it was possible to detect a slight blush.

Briefly, Sir Richard got serious. Asked what he hoped his report would achieve, he said: "I hope it will assist the movement towards more openness in government and a reduction of what has sometimes been called 'the culture of secrecy in Whitehall'."

Sir Richard said his report would inevitably become "a political football." The start of that was happening today and that is going to go on.

Asked whether there had been attempts to impede his inquiry, he said: "If there were, I think they failed."

Mostly, he seemed relieved that it was all over and his report was now the concern of others. He apologised that he had not produced a summary to make everyone's lives easier but confessed that he had "reached a point of writing fatigue" after 1,800 pages and could not face the idea of writing any more.

He sounded almost demotivated, like a man about to go on holiday, which is exactly what he is doing. Today he begins a week-long break in Ireland before returning to "normal life" as Vice Chancellor of the Supreme Court.

Continued from page 1

artillery shells, land mines and cluster bombs have been licensed for export."

At his press conference yesterday, the judge said that he had found himself "not quite agreeing with some of the things" Mr Lang had said. Asked how the Government could claim that he had exonerated ministers from deliberately misleading Parliament when his report specifically used the word "deliberately," Sir Richard said: "I drafted that paragraph very carefully." The words in the report and not the Government's interpretation reflected his view.

On the Matrix Churchill case, Sir Richard said he could not accept that Sir Nicholas Lyell "was not personally at fault" for the failure to brief the trial prosecutors of Michael Heseltine's reluctance to sign a PII certificate withholding vital information from the defence.

Sir Nicholas had promised Mr Heseltine that his concerns would be relayed to the trial judge. "The issues that had been raised by Mr Heseltine's stand on the PII certificate did not fall into the category of mundane, routine, run-of-the-mill issues that could properly be left to be dealt with by officials in the Treasury Solicitor's Department without the Attorney-General's supervision," the report said.

He added: "I would not have expected Mr Heseltine, a non-lawyer, to have articulated them. But I would have expected the Attorney General to have done so. I would have expected him to recognise that important constitutional and legal issues were raised by Mr

Heseltine's stand and to have ensured that Mr Moses, whose responsibility was to place the issues fairly before the court, was adequately instructed so that he could discharge that responsibility."

Both Sir Nicholas and Mr Waldegrave insisted last night that they would not resign. Sir Nicholas said: "The Scott inquiry has made it clear in its report that accusations that ministers signed PII certificates in order to suppress information and were prepared to see innocent men sent to prison are completely false and without foundation. My advice to ministers on PII was fully in accordance with the law as it then stood."

"Mr Heseltine's PII certificate was specially redrafted to emphasise that the final decision on whether documents should be disclosed was for the court. Although prosecuting counsel's instructions did not include my correspondence with Mr Heseltine, the system operated exactly as it was intended to do. Every document was shown to the judge."

Mr Waldegrave insisted that Sir Richard had cleared him of "lying to Parliament or intending to mislead anyone in letters I signed. He also proves beyond doubt that I did not connive in allowing machine tools for arms manufacture to go to Iraq; he says I would have stopped them going if certain intelligence reports had reached me. I am grateful to Sir Richard for listening carefully to what I said to him, above all for accepting my good faith."

"I have no reason to resign at all because he has cleared my name and my honour and that is the central thing."



Shepherd: unhappy with ministers' behaviour

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Lang steals Labour thunder

Continued from page 1

never quite regained the force it had before Cook rose.

The Liberal Democrats' Menzies Campbell questioned shrewdly. Labour's Gerald Kaufman, who had now found himself in the index, intervened to good effect.

The former Chief Whip, Sir Timothy Renton, found so many references to himself that he had to summarise. The action settled down to the familiar ding-dong, tension having passed its high-water mark.

Ministers survive. But if

Lang had stumbled during his first, critical quarter-hour, or if Cook's counter-attack had failed (as Neil Kinnock, after Westland, once failed) things would be different. They are now set, and no broadcasting studio will change them.

The Chamber does matter.

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Scott report: Commons hears Tories fight off resignation calls

Lang and Cook clash over who is guilty of what

JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

THE three-year inquiry into the arms-to-Iraq affair by Sir Richard Scott "totally vindicated" the role of Government ministers, MPs were told yesterday.

In a statement to the Commons, Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, said that Sir Richard proved there had been "no conspiracy and no cover-up". He said: "This conclusion gives the lie to the many scurrilous comments made by Labour MPs and by many in the media."

Amid chaotic scenes, his statement was repeatedly interrupted by Labour MPs who waved copies of the report and shouted "Guilty" at the Tory front bench.

Mr Lang said the main reason for setting up the inquiry was the "grave allegation" that ministers, by signing public interest immunity certificates (PIIs), had conspired in a way which could have sent men to prison.

"Sir Richard Scott's report demonstrates that this allegation is false and without foundation," he said. "Sir Richard Scott concludes, after over three years of painstaking investigation, that all ministers who signed PII certificates did so without impropriety. There is no criticism of them for so doing. There was no attempt to gag. There was no conspiracy to jail innocent men."

Mr Lang said that for three years several ministers had endured "repeated abuse and attacks upon their honour and integrity of the most offensive and unpleasant nature over their signing of the PII certificates."

They now stand wholly vindicated by the report.

The Government had followed well-established case law, backed up by independent legal advice, that ministers both had a duty to sign PII certificates and that such certificates were applicable in criminal cases.

"The Attorney-General took advice on this from independent and eminent counsel, and the Government's handling of PII was endorsed by three defence counsel in the Mairix Churchill trial."

"In his report, Sir Richard Scott does not in any way question the personal integrity of the Attorney-General. He does, however, express criticism of the adequacy of the instructions to prosecuting counsel conveying the views of the then President of the Board of Trade [Michael Heseltine], and in particular that the Attorney-General should personally have supervised them."

"It must be a matter of opinion whether that was something which the Attorney-General could reasonably have been expected to do. Sir Richard does, however, accept the genuineness of the Attorney-General's belief that it was not."

The Government remains firmly of the view that the advice given at the time to ministers by the Attorney-General was correct and there is no doubt he acted throughout with complete propriety and integrity."

On the key question of whether the Government's guidelines on the sale of



Ian Lang, flanked by John Major and Michael Heseltine, delivering his statement to the Commons yesterday

military-related goods to Iran and Iraq had changed. Mr Lang said: "Richard Scott concludes that, following the ceasefire in 1988 but not before, Government policy towards the export of non-lethal military goods changed in a way which, he believes, should have been drawn to the attention of the House."

"Both ministers and officials believed at the time that they were applying policy in a way which remained within the existing guidelines, and Sir Richard expressly accepts that they were sincere in doing so."

"However, he does not agree that they were correct in their belief. On this basis, he concludes that a number of ministers' letters and answers to parliamentary questions were inaccurate because they restated what ministers understood to be the policy but which Sir Richard believes, in retrospect, had changed."

"The crucial issue is whether these junior ministers intended to mislead this House and the country. Sir Richard gives an unequivocal answer on this. He accepts that the ministers believed they were avoiding a formal change to

the guidelines and that, in holding this belief, they had to quote his words, 'no duplicitous intention'."

On the specific case of William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, who at the time was a junior Foreign Office Minister, Sir Richard believed that the minister did not intend his letters to be misleading and did not so regard them."

To Tory cheers, Mr Lang declared: "Mr Waldegrave is

therefore absolved of the charge that he intended to mislead members of this House or anyone else."

Mr Lang admitted that there were lessons to be learnt from the Scott report and said the Government would consider its recommendations.

For Labour, Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, challenged the Prime Minister to sack ministers whom Sir Richard felt had failed to discharge their obligations of ministerial responsibility to the Commons. He said that the Scott report clearly proved that ministers changed guidelines on defence sales to Iraq and repeatedly refused to admit it to Parliament.

Mr Cook asked: "Are you really going to ask the House to accept a report that over five volumes demonstrates how this Government misjudged Saddam Hussein, misled MPs and misdirected the prosecution, and then tell us that none of them is going to accept responsibility for getting it wrong?"

"Will he tell us whether the Government will dismiss those ministers who in the opinion of Sir Richard failed to discharge the obligations of ministerial accountability to the House? Will you take those steps which are now essential if they [the Government] are to be trusted in office?"

After putting a series of questions to Mr Lang, Mr Cook said: "I warn you, if you fail to answer these questions, this Government will forfeit any right to remain in office."

"You have just made a statement in which you lay blame on the Opposition, blame on the official advice, blame on the system, but accept no blame for ministers. I have to say the public outside will not find that a credible response to such a serious report."

"I have spent the last three hours studying this report, and it fully vindicates our two central charges: that ministers changed the guidelines on the defence sales to Saddam Hussein; and that they repeatedly refused to admit that either to Parliament or to the courts."

Mr Cook said that Mr Lang had accepted what many government witnesses at the Scott inquiry tried to deny: that the guidelines on defence sales were changed and that the Government failed to inform Parliament of the change.

"Now you have accepted that conclusion, will you accept Sir Richard's conclusion that this was deliberate and the result of three ministers agreeing to give it no publicity? The reason they gave it no publicity was because they

didn't want the public outrage that would greet it."

Mr Cook challenged Mr Lang: "Are you really going to ask us to accept a report that shows that the current Treasury Chief Secretary [Mr Waldegrave] sent 27 letters to MPs which were misleading and which he was in a position to know were misleading, and he remains in office as if this report had never been published?"

"Are you really going to ask us to accept a report which shows that the Attorney-General [Sir Nicholas Lyell] wrongly advised ministers, failed to tell the court that at least one minister signed under protest and then say he can stay in office?"

Mr Cook concluded: "This report reveals the price Britain pays for a culture of secrecy in government. It documents how ministers changed the guidelines but were more worried that MPs and the public might find out than what Saddam Hussein did with those."

To Tory cheers, Mr Lang challenged Mr Cook to apologise or resign. "For the last three years, week after week, month after month, you have fed the House and the press and the public a sour stream of invective, innuendo and invention," he said. "It has been one of the most odious campaigns of manipulation and black propaganda that the House will be able to recall."

For the Liberal Democrats, Menzies Campbell said it was "blindingly clear" from the report that "the Government stands condemned... of deliberately failing to inform members of Parliament and Parliament itself of a fundamental change in policy and a consistent failure to discharge its constitutional responsibilities."

He said the Attorney-General had given "wrong legal advice" on the PIIs. "How can the House and the public have confidence in him? How can anyone have confidence in the present Chief Secretary to the Treasury when... his views are rejected by Sir Richard Scott as 'misleading', 'not corresponding with reality' and 'sophistry'?"

Mr Lang replied: "What you are asking the House to believe is that Mr Waldegrave, along with two other ministers, single-handedly changed government policy without telling his own Secretary of State, against the advice of many of his officials, sustained that change for several years with no-one knowing. That is 'palpably incredible' and Sir Richard Scott accepts that."

Woman who sailed on Titanic dies at 91

Survivors of the Titanic disaster paid tribute yesterday to Eva Hart, who has died aged 91. Miss Hart is pictured right shortly after she and 704 other people were rescued when the liner went down on her maiden voyage in 1912. Miss Hart, from Chadwell Heath, east London, who died on Wednesday, was seven when the supposedly unsinkable liner hit an iceberg 500 miles off Newfoundland. Her father was one of the 1,523 who died. She was determined that the wreck should be respected as a marine grave to honour his memory. Her autobiography, *Shadow of the Titanic*, was published recently. She was appointed MBE in 1974. The disaster's youngest survivor, Millvina Dean, 84, said: "Miss Hart was an extremely nice woman and I shall certainly miss her". Edith Haisman, 99, from Southampton, the oldest survivor, expressed her sympathy to Miss Hart's family.



Vegetarian's brain tested

Tests are being carried out on the brain of Peter Hall, 20, a suspected victim of the human counterpart of "mad cow" disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Mr Hall, of Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, died after an illness during which he showed symptoms associated with Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. Although Mr Hall became a vegetarian in 1992, his parents believe he could have been exposed to infected meat as a child.

Driver gets five years

The son of a wealthy businessman, who killed two people in a road accident was sent to a young offenders' institution for five years yesterday after he admitted causing death by dangerous driving. Neil Henson, 19, from Newcastle upon Tyne, was doing 70mph in a 40mph zone when he hit a pedestrian. His girlfriend, a passenger in his car, also died. Henson, who was over the drink-drive limit, was banned from driving for seven years by Leeds Crown Court.

Body found in lake

Detectives are interviewing a man in connection with the murder of Jeanette Broadhead, 23, whose naked body was found face down in a lake in Heaton Park, Manchester, on St Valentine's Day. Miss Broadhead, from Rusholme, Manchester, died from "pressure to the neck", according to detectives. Police said she had facial injuries but had not been sexually assaulted. Detective Superintendent Roy Rainford said she was not a prostitute.

New play up to scratch

The actor Tom Conti is giving audiences the chance to President professional critics before his revival of Neil Simon's risqué comedy, *Chapter Two*, at the Gielgud Theatre in life for the play Avenue on Monday. During preview performances he has been handing out scratchcards for redistribution to register their opinions of the play. The results will be published in newspaper classified theatre columns when the show opens.

Trawlers net submarine

A German submarine became entangled in the fishing nets of two British trawlers off the South West of England yesterday (Michael Hornsby writes). The incident occurred 15 miles south of Plymouth breakwater around noon, less than a month after the adoption of a new safety code designed to prevent such accidents. There were no injuries and no damage was sustained by any of the vessels, the Ministry of Defence said.

Asda fined £40,000

The supermarket giant Asda was fined a total of £40,000 yesterday after children found objects including an insect and a screw in food bought at its instore bakery in Bradford. A boy aged 12 found a screw in his mouth after eating bread purchased from the store. A seven-year-old girl saw an insect in bread and a nine-year-old boy found plastic in a hot-cross bun. Asda admitted seven counts and said the matter was regrettable.

Bomb hero suspended

Chief Inspector Michael Parks, who led a dazed Margaret Thatcher to safety from the ruins of the Prime Minister's hotel after the IRA bombing in Brighton 12 years ago, has been suspended indefinitely while he is investigated over "administrative matters", Sussex Police said. The inquiry is believed to centre on the running of a police welfare fund. After rescuing Baroness Thatcher, he returned to the wreckage to help Leon Brittan and Douglas Hurd.

Statue for soldier

A forgotten hero of the Battle of Arras in 1944 could become one of the few common soldiers to be commemorated by a statue. Lance-Sergeant Jack Basketfield, a butcher's boy from Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, won a posthumous VC. The 21-year-old paratrooper knocked out three German tanks before being killed. Local residents are trying to raise £37,000 to erect a statue of Basketfield and have already raised nearly £7,000.

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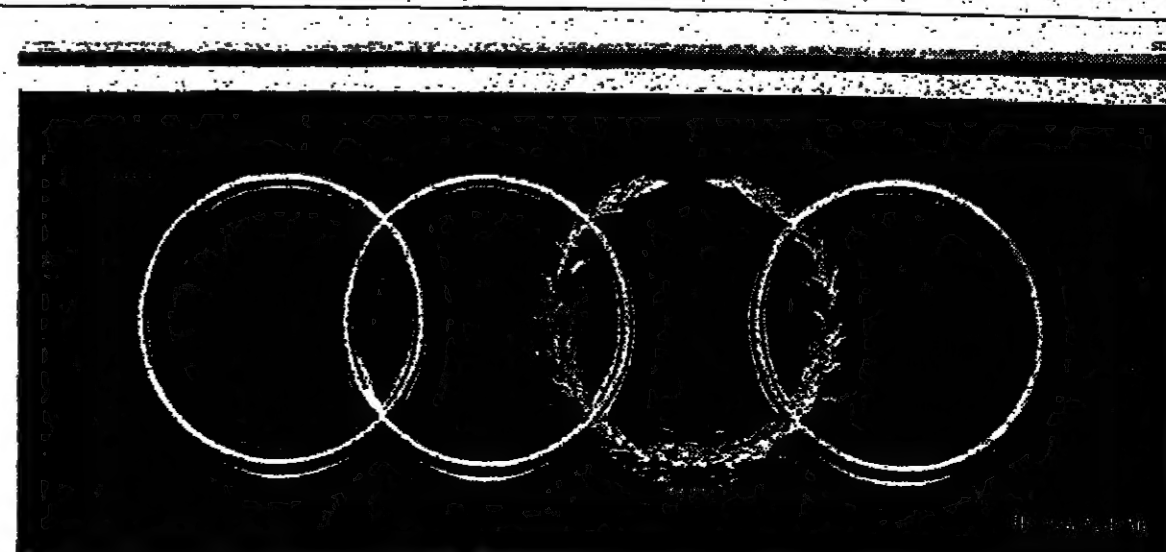


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Fears of loyalist retaliation increase after IRA says there will be no peace before talks

West End bomb prompts security crackdown

By NICHOLAS WATT
AND RICHARD FORD

SECURITY at important moments in London was further heightened yesterday after the discovery of the capital's first bomb in a week, a car parked in a narrow street in the West End. Police discovered the device in a car parked in a narrow street in the West End. Police discovered the device in a car parked in a narrow street in the West End.

It emerged yesterday that two buildings in Docklands are demolition and three more may have to be pulled down after last Friday's bomb explosion in east London.

Scotland Yard has already spoken of attacks "anywhere, anytime or any place" with the belief that the terrorists will vary their tactics to cause maximum confusion and make people think they are able to strike at will.

The IRA said it had ended the cessation of violence because it did not believe there was a "glimmer of hope" that Britain would meet its commitment to hold all-party talks. A spokesman for the IRA's "general headquarters" said in *Republican News*, the Sinn Féin newspaper: "John Major has acted in bad faith throughout the period of the IRA cessation, introducing one pre-condition after another. He has betrayed the

Mary Robinson, the Irish President, last night urged politicians to commit themselves to re-establishing peace in the Province. Mrs. Robinson said on a visit to Lisburn, Co. Antrim: "We can build on the way in which people are reaching out to each other. We must go on doing that. I think, with even more determination and I hope that at the political level this will be matched by a commitment to re-establish the kind of secure peace that means so much."

the cessation of violence because it did not believe there was a "glimmer of hope" that Britain would meet its commitment to hold all-party talks. A spokesman for the IRA's "general headquarters" said in *Republican News*, the Sinn Féin newspaper: "John Major has acted in bad faith throughout the period of the IRA cessation, introducing one pre-condition after another. He has betrayed the

Irish peace process and has deliberately squandered this opportunity to resolve the causes of the age-old conflict between Britain and the Irish people. He did so to keep himself in power."

The spokesman accused the Government of being interested only in forcing republicans to surrender. He added that the IRA "could not persist in a sham whose sole purpose had become the attainment of an IRA surrender."

He refused to give details about the IRA's renewed campaign but he made clear that there was little hope of another ceasefire until Britain agrees to hold all-party talks. The spokesman said: "There is only one place for all the political representatives of the Irish people to go and that is the negotiating table. Current British policy prevents all those with a democratic mandate from sitting around that table. Where the rights of a community are denied, then there is inevitable conflict."

In Docklands, the South Quay Plaza, where two men died last Friday, could cost at least £30 million to demolish and rebuild. Robert Tchenguiz, chairman of Roth Property Group, which owns the plaza, said the building was insured against acts of terrorism. Very little of it remained, he said.

The five-storey offices of the Barker Group, a publishing company, is also structurally unsound, according to Pam Barker, one of the company's directors. Investigators suggested further properties may be at risk, but said they would have a clearer picture today when they are allowed across police cordons to make detailed estimates.

Yesterday's attack raised fears of renewed terrorist activity in Northern Ireland, as loyalist paramilitaries come under intense pressure to retaliate for bombs in London.



An anti-terrorist police vehicle in Charing Cross Road, in the alert that gridlocked central London for six hours. The device was sent for tests



The peace process as seen by Signe of the Philadelphia Daily News after the IRA bombing

Scientists examine device found in call-box for terrorist 'trademark'

By ADRIAN LEE

FINDING yesterday's intact IRA device, which has been sent for scientific tests, could give anti-terrorist officers a breakthrough in their search for the London terrorists.

Every home-made device carries the "fingerprints" of the maker — his individual style — and comparing its construction with earlier finds may give clues as to who built it. The small device discovered yesterday in a telephone box is thought to be like those previously placed in litter bins.

The IRA has launched several litter-bin bomb campaigns, the last in 1993, when two children were killed in Warrington. A bin bomb showered a shopping area with chunks of metal. In the

same year, litter-bin bombs injured 18 people in Camden, north London, and four people outside Harrods.

Yesterday's device was found in the "seat" of a similar IRA attack on the Sussex public house near Covent Garden in October 1992, in which a customer died. That attack and yesterday's attempt follow an IRA tradition of bombing public meeting places. In 1974 two attacks on Birmingham pubs killed 21 people and injured 162.

Two bomb-squad officers have been killed while trying to defuse IRA bombs. In 1975, Roger Goad died while trying to make safe a bomb in Kensington. In October 1981, Kenneth Horwath, 49, died while tackling a device at a takeaway restaurant in Oxford Street.

Anti-Terrorist Branch officers are currently analysing personnel records of IRA members in Northern Ireland.

Each is a volunteer trained to deal with anything from a crude incendiary bomb to a sophisticated IRA device or a Second World War relic. The team is based at New Scotland Yard and is on stand-by 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Ulster ceasefires — the last IRA device defused in London was in Regent Street in August 1994 — has not meant that the team has slackened its efforts, although the numbers of officers deployed is thought to have been reduced by a fifth.

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said: "Just because the Provisional IRA threat has

been reduced until lately, that does not mean the terrorist threat has disappeared. Many other groups from the Middle East and elsewhere are a threat and there has been no let-up."

In 1994 the Metropolitan bomb squad was called to 914 incidents but most were false alarms. Its busiest year was 1992, when officers were called out 2,233 times. In 1993, 34 IRA bombs exploded on mainland Britain, ten devices did not explode and a further 19 ignited but did not explode.

The squad, founded in 1971, is responsible for organising searches, assessing the size and threat of any device and deciding on the size of the safety cordon around the threatened area.

Second alert disrupts theatreland

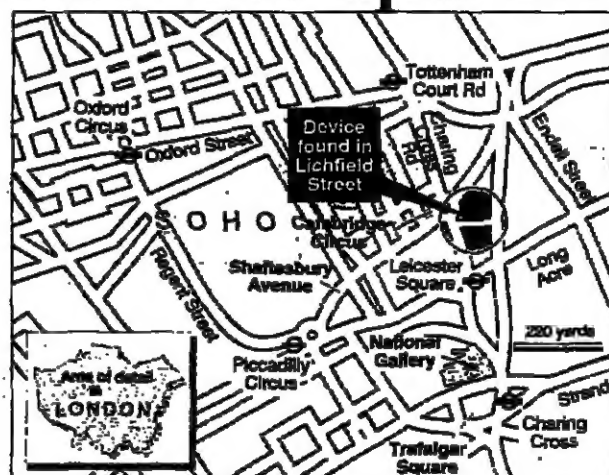
By PETER FOSTER
AND OLIVER AUGUST

MATINEE performances of several West End shows were cancelled yesterday as central London was gridlocked for almost six hours after the discovery of the device in the capital's theatreland.

At the Palace Theatre, Cambridge Circus, where a showing of the musical *Les Misérables* had to be called off, police told up to 100 people including stage hands, performers and members of the audience who had arrived early to stay in the building, away from windows.

The box office said the disappointed audience were being offered a refund or the chance to see the show at a later date. The evening performance went ahead.

Matinees of *Crazy for You*, at the Prince Edward Theatre in Old Compton Street, and of



David Storey's play *The Changing Room*, at the Duke of York's in St Martin's Lane, also had to be cancelled.

AA Roadwatch reported long traffic delays across central London after an area from Oxford Street to Piccadilly Circus was sealed off.

The most disrupted areas were the City, Knightsbridge and the A501 Euston to Marylebone road.

Traffic was also reported to be bottlenecked around the bridges as drivers tried to

avoid the jams by crossing the Thames.

Six central Underground stations were closed during the search for the bomb.

Charing Cross was quickly reopened after a search. But Covent Garden, Piccadilly, Leicester Square, Tottenham Court Road and Holborn stations remained closed, with trains allowed to pass through without stopping.

Bus traffic was also severely restricted by the security alert. The police asked London Transport to keep buses just outside the West End at Hyde Park Corner, Aldwych and Euston.

Several services were not resumed until late afternoon and many passengers were stranded in the West End. London Transport said it regretted not being able to inform passengers about the restrictions and when they were to be lifted.

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International team of doctors combines keyhole bypass technique with widening of arteries

Pioneering operation 'will transform heart surgery'

By JEREMY LAURANCE
HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

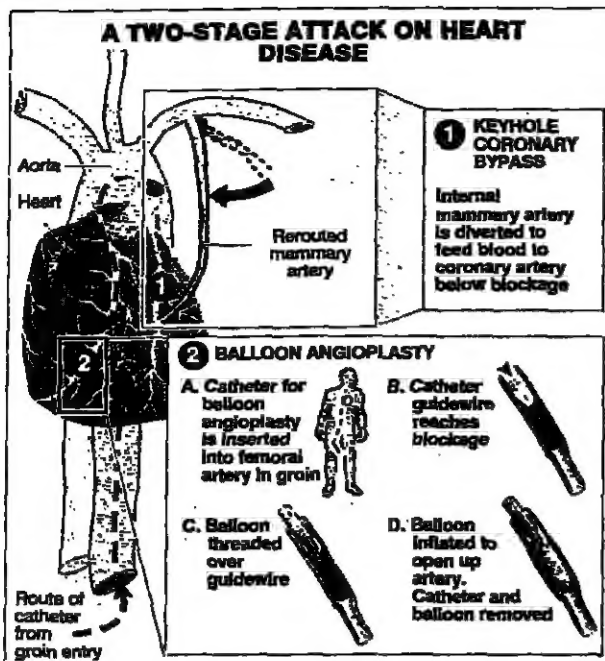
A MEDICAL team in Bristol has become the first in the world to carry out a new two-stage operation, which is predicted to transform the treatment of thousands of people.

The operation, performed through a small incision in the chest, was hailed by the British Heart Foundation as a development that may spare patients the trauma of major surgery. About 25,000 open heart operations are performed in Britain each year and up to a million worldwide.

An international team assembled by the Bristol Heart Institute carried out the procedure at the Bristol Royal Infirmary last week. It combines keyhole bypass surgery, in which a new artery is stitched on to the front of the heart, with angioplasty, in which a balloon technique is used to expand narrowed arteries at the back of the heart.

The joint procedure avoids the need for major open-heart surgery but allows both the front and back of the heart to be treated, which is not possible with the keyhole technique alone.

The patient, Dennis Dummett, 61, required only one small incision on the left side of his chest through which the keyhole bypass was performed. Surgeons diverted the internal mammary artery



supplying the chest wall to the front coronary artery, bypassing the blockage.

Cardiologists then introduced the catheter carrying the balloon for the angioplasty, to treat the coronary artery at the back of the heart. This was done in the conventional way through a hollow needle inserted into an artery in the groin.

Mr Dummett, from Frampton Cotterell near Bristol, was in the recovery room for just over two hours after his operation.

He was sitting up in bed the next day and was sent home two days later.

Conventional open heart bypass surgery requires a six-inch vertical cut in the chest, splitting the breast bone and stopping the heart temporarily. The patient is put on a heart lung machine. Veins from the thigh are stitched to the front and back of the heart, bypassing blockages. Patients spend 10 to 12 days in hospital and six weeks recuperating.

Professor Gianni Angelini,

who led the team, said: "The procedure is set to transform heart surgery and I believe it will lead to a reduction of as much as 20 to 40 per cent in the number of conventional bypasses. In a few years' time everyone will be doing it."

Professor Angelini, whose post is funded by the British Heart Foundation, was joined for the operation by Professor Antonio Calafiore from Italy, a pioneer of keyhole bypass surgery, and Professor Tomas Salerno from the United States. Although it was the first time the combined procedure had been performed, the team had experience of more than 200 keyhole bypass operations.

Professor Brian Pentecost, director of the Bristol Heart Foundation, said the advantage of the combined procedure was that it reduced the risks and improved the outcome. "If you have three or four coronary arteries that are diseased, the risks of angioplasty increase. If one is damaged during the procedure you don't have the insurance that the others can take over. By first attaching a new artery graft to the front of the heart using the keyhole technique you have an umbrella of safety," he said.

Many patients undergoing heart surgery require second operations years later when their coronary arteries narrow again but these would be easier and safer if they had not



Dennis Dummett: looking forward to walking the family dogs and square dancing

undergone major surgery the first time, Professor Pentecost said.

The Royal College of Surgeons requires specialists who wish to take up keyhole surgery to undergo training first. Surgeons are then awarded certificates indicating the specialty in which they may

practise and the range of procedures they are trained to perform. The skills are checked and a new certificate issued every five years. People with heart disease who suppress their emotions and tend to be negative have a four times greater risk of premature death, researchers

from Belgium have found. They said in *The Lancet* that a study of 303 patients taking part in a cardiac rehabilitation programme who were followed for up to ten years found that those who tended to experience negative emotions, and not express their feelings, were more likely to die.

Patient is eager to dance with delight

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

DENNIS DUMMETT was apprehensive about becoming a guinea pig but is delighted that his example will set a medical precedent.

"I was only asked to volunteer for the operation two weeks beforehand," he said. "But I put my faith in the specialist staff at the hospital and I would advise anyone who has the chance of this technique to take it."

The pain and breathlessness that accompanied his angina forced him to give up square dancing, his favourite pastime, 18 months ago. Now the former engineer is looking forward to swinging his wife Natalie round the floor again.

First he must reign back his enthusiasm. "I feel exceptionally well," Mr Dummett said. "The only problem I have is making sure that I do not do too much too soon."

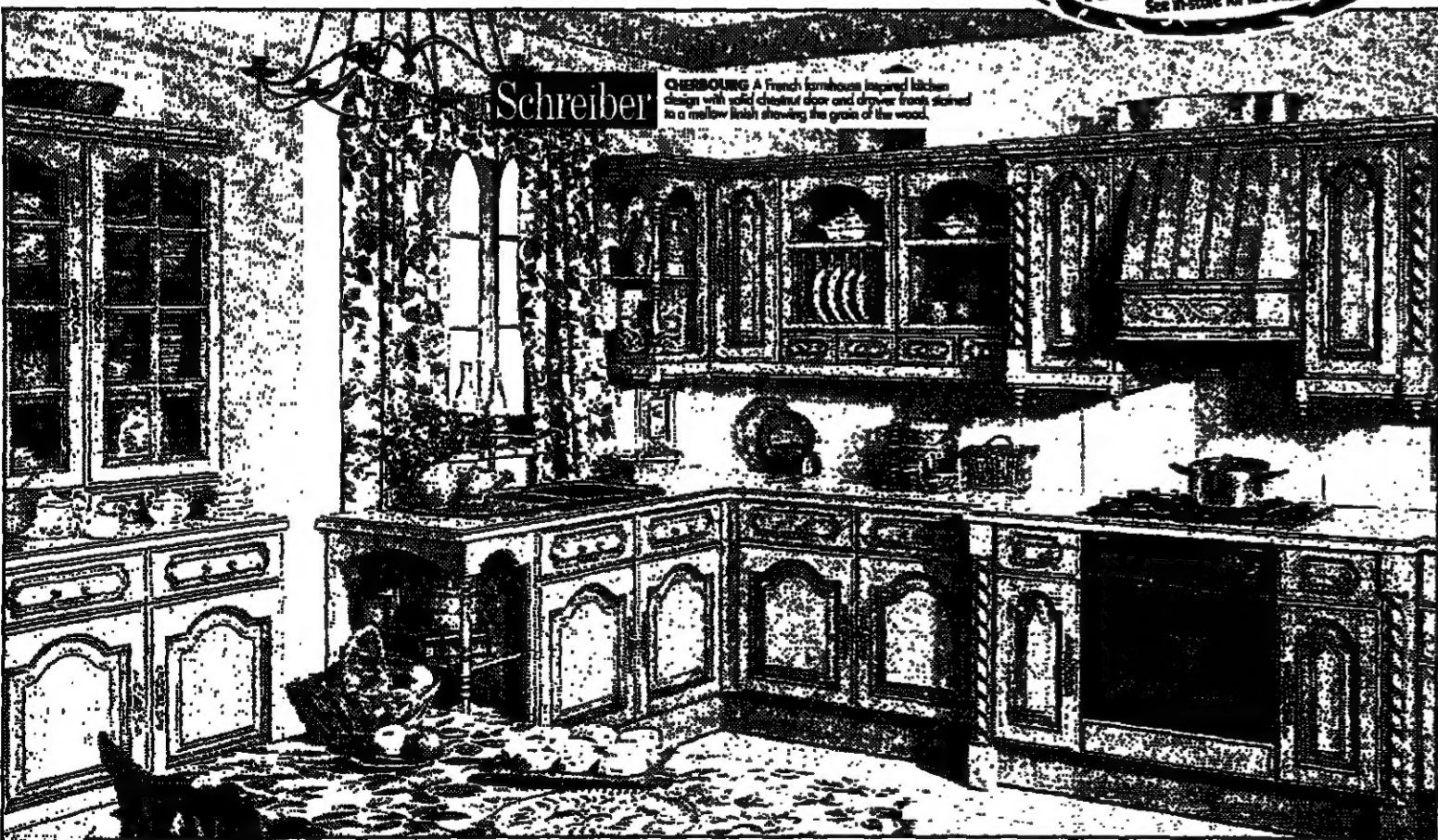
The couple, who have a daughter, Beverley, 33, and son, Gregory, 30, danced at venues round the country for four times a week. Mr Dummett, 59, said: "It was a big part of our life. We really missed it. In a couple of months or so we hope to go back to it." Mr Dummett plans to resume playing his electronic organ in about a week and to take the family dogs for a walk again.

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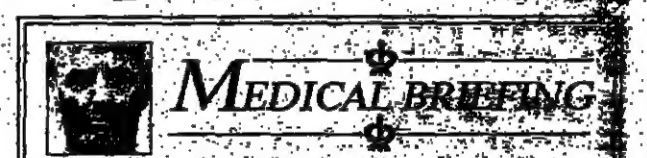
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Asthmatics breathe easier as high-tech replaces the lows

A NEW device has been introduced by Allen and Hanbury that will enable asthmatic patients to inhale a measured dose of drugs to relax the spasms in the muscles of the bronchial tubes, or diminish the inflammation in their lining.

Systems for delivering drugs to the lungs have long been a leading research area where they will soon have power, has exercised ingenuity of doctors for centuries. In the 17th and 18th centuries, asthmatic patients smoked a mixture of herbs including lobelia, stramonium and hyoscyamus mixed with tobacco, opium or, even in those days, cannabis.

By the 1930s and 1940s, asthmatics were still encouraged to smoke herbs, but by then the opium tobacco and pot had been left out of the mixture. The actor Donald Sinden, when a boy, suffered from asthma and has described how he had to inhale Doctor Potter's herbal



Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Other patients, afflicted with various forms of asthma, and indeed the mists they created. It was only in 1956 that an ex-Spitfire pilot designed the first of the modern metered-dose inhalers. As befitted an invention of a fighter pilot, the inhaler discharged the dose at 65 to 90 miles an hour. Despite this, only 10 per cent of the drug reaches the bronchial tubes. The other principal problem with the pressure inhalers is that the patient has no record of amounts taken. The Accubaler, launched this week, is simple to use and has a recording device that reduces the risk of over-dosage.

The British Thoracic Society has recently said that, many deaths and much unnecessary disease have been associated with over-reliance on bronchodilators, but overuse of inhaled steroid treatment. There has been a failure to make objective measurements of the severity of attacks and there has been inadequate supervision. A dose counter will help patients to monitor their own therapy and provide an easy reminder if they forget a dose.



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High-powered careers put MPs in the shade

Peers turn over a new leaf with register of interests

BY ALICE THOMSON, POLITICAL REPORTER

PEERS revealed emphatically yesterday that living like a lord does not mean pottering round estates to hunt, shoot or fish, with occasional forays to Westminster for gossip and subsidised cigars. The first register of their interests shows that a modern peer is more likely to be able to run an investment bank than control a pack of hounds.

The 60-page edition of the new red book lists not only high-powered careers but also vocations as diverse as dentist, freelance zoologist, taxi driver, bus conductor, sculptor, fashion designer, sub-postmaster, author and columnist on *The Sun*. There is also an extraordinary array of hobbies and a deep commitment to charity work. MPs looked dusty in comparison.

More than 300 peers out of 1,100 have offered to write down their interests in the voluntary section of the red book. Two hundred more are expected to put their names

forward for the next edition. Members of the Royal Family have declined to join in, but everyone is still expected to declare their interests when relevant during debates.

Hereditary peers include the president of Sainsbury plc and the chairman of Pearson plc. Lord Wade of Chorlton is chairman or president of nine companies. More than 100 act as unpaid chairmen for charities. Unlike MPs, none admits to free overseas trips.

Several have unusual hobbies. The Earl of Clanwilliam is passionate about alternative medicine and is patron of the Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the National Institute of Medical Herbalists. Viscount Caldecote is "interested in ship design and building".

A few still partake of more traditional activities. There are a string of stud farmers, racehorse trainers and owners of historic houses. Earl Haig puts "rapiarian owner of the



Haig: pursuing the traditional interests

Tweed" as well as saying he is a professional painter.

Far from being aloof, many are avid participants in clubs such as the Alpine Garden Society. Viscount Waverley lists nothing except "member of the Friends of Burundi and participant in parliamentary seminars in Bujumbura". The register has been

rushed into the Lords after accusations that some of its occupants had abused their position, such as by taking cash for tabling questions. The necessity of a register horrified many who have believed that peers should be trusted to act on personal honour.

Before the register was published, rumours spread that more than 300 were now paid by consultancy companies. In the end, only 27 admitted to receiving any incentive or reward for parliamentary services, and they were split evenly between Labour and Tory peers.

Yesterday peers were far more fascinated by their red book than by the Scott report. One senior Tory said: "It is just a bit of fun and makes us look as though we are trying to be more professional."

"But in the end it won't make much difference. We already know who owns half of Scotland or a chunk of the City, and who has been forced into working for the lobbyists."



Musa Komeagac, second from left, in court yesterday. His father, centre, and a cleric, right, also face charges

Schoolgirl's Turkish 'husband' freed on bail

A COURT in Kahramanmaraş, eastern Turkey, bailed Musa Komeagac, the "husband" of 13-year-old Sarah Cook, after committing him for trial on charges of statutory rape yesterday (Andrew Finkel writes from Istanbul).

The crowded courtroom erupted into loud applause when the state prosecutor asked for Mr Komeagac, 18, to be released. His lawyers had presented

evidence of a hospital report on Sarah's bone structure, which suggested she had a biological age of over 15 years. The two met while Mr Komeagac was a waiter in a Mediterranean resort where Sarah, from Braintree in Essex, was on a family holiday.

The trial is adjourned until April. Musa's father Ali was committed for trial as an accomplice, as was Ahmet

Dag, the Muslim cleric who had performed a marriage ceremony that has no status under Turkish law. He told the court that Sarah looked 18 or 19 and "said she was a Muslim".

The decision to release the waiter was praised in the town, where Sarah is known as "the national bride" and her partner is considered a local hero. He was taken on a lap of honour.

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Greet a new year or admit old sins

BY ROBIN YOUNG

THE Chinese new year of the rat starts on Monday, the day after is Shrove Tuesday and shops are marking both with price reductions. The showiest promotions are for Chinese ingredients such as "stir-fry sauces" and mussels, noodles, ginger, bean sprouts, lychees and the increasingly varied ranges of ready-prepared Chinese meals.

The requirements for pancakes are simpler and there are special offers on flour, eggs, syrup, oranges and lemons. For those unwilling to toss their own, Marks & Spencer is promoting boxes of microwavable ready-made pancakes complete with maple and raisin, toffee or chocolate sauce.

Advertised promotions include: Asda: fresh beef rump steak £1.19/kg, fresh boneless pork leg £3.28/kg, 450g chicken £3.99, onions 50p/2.5kg, carrots 40p/2kg, green seedless grapes 79p/lb. Budgets: McDonald's plate/self-saucing flour 50p, 1.5kg, Rows: maple syrup £1.99/350g, Jif lemon 29p/55ml, Bluecrest prime saddleback fillet 12.99/2.2kg, £2.29/600g, broccoli 59p/lb. Co-op: fresh turkey thigh joint with herbs £1.99/800g, four steak, kidney and onion pie: 99p, sausage, bacon and egg quiche £1.19/395g, deep dish chicken and sweetcorn pie £1.26/454g, Cherry Valley chicken dice £2.49/2.2kg. Harrods: tiger prawns with mango and ginger dressing £3.95/100g, Maryland crab cakes £2.95 each, scallop with salmon mousse £2.95 each, mozzarella di bufala cheese £1.50 each.

Island: smoked gammon joint £4.44/kg, breaded haddock fillet £1.49/600g, pepperoni 9in pizza 99p, turkey mince 99p/500g, two whole boneless breaded fillets £1.29, Mediterranean fish bake 99p/300g, extra large pork £1.79/400g, minced peas 99p/300g, Oriental vegetable mix £1.29 for 900g.

Marks & Spencer: Chinese menu for two £4.99/870g, roast chicken plate pie £2.49/350g, £3 mince and raisin, toffee or chocolate pancakes 69p, oranges in caramel with Grand Marnier £1.25/300g, new potatoes £1.29/kg. Morrisons: tandoori chicken ball mussels £1.99/400g, sticky toffee pudding £1.59/350g, oysters 39p each, mussels 99p/kg, whole trout £2.94/kg, cod steaks £2.97/kg, whole herring £2.09/kg.

Sainsbury: six turkey breast steaks £3.19/367g, turkey stir-fry £2.49/454g, diced stewing steak £4.09/kg, medium chicken £1.79/lb, British roast leg of pork 79p/lb, Irish medium cheddar £1.89/lb, Conference pears 38p/lb, Golden Delicious apples 38p/lb.

Sainsbury: Peking duck £4.45/900g, fresh leg of lamb £3.99/kg, fresh topside/silver-side £3.99/kg, salmon steaks 18 kg, premium pork boneless roast joint £3.50/kg, two lemons 18p, courgettes 85p/lb, double cream 99p/568ml, Somerdale: casserole beef £2.19/1.5kg, chicken £1.79/400g, £1.49/454g, fresh British pork king ribs £2.46/kg, mixed vegetable stir-fry £1.09/500g, fresh scallops 99p/lb, £1.57/lb, baby new potatoes 99p/500g, loose Egyptian new potatoes 14p/lb, Emure: 800g Apples 39p/lb.

Tesco: stilton steak 59.99/kg, pork tenderloin 25.79/kg, lamb loin chops £7.69/kg, crispy bake mixed pork pie £1.19/450g, cod fillet £1.95/lb, live codling 99p each, broccoli 79p/450g, jaffa cake £1.59 for 12, fresh large eggs £1.33 for 12. Waitrose: British pork boneless shoulder roast £2.99/kg, fresh chicken olives £2.29 for 400g, Scottish salmon fillets £3.99/lb, dwarf carrots 99p for 200g, Cyprus lemons 15p each, blood oranges 99p/kg.

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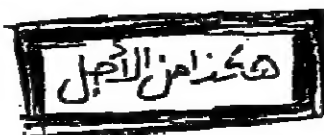
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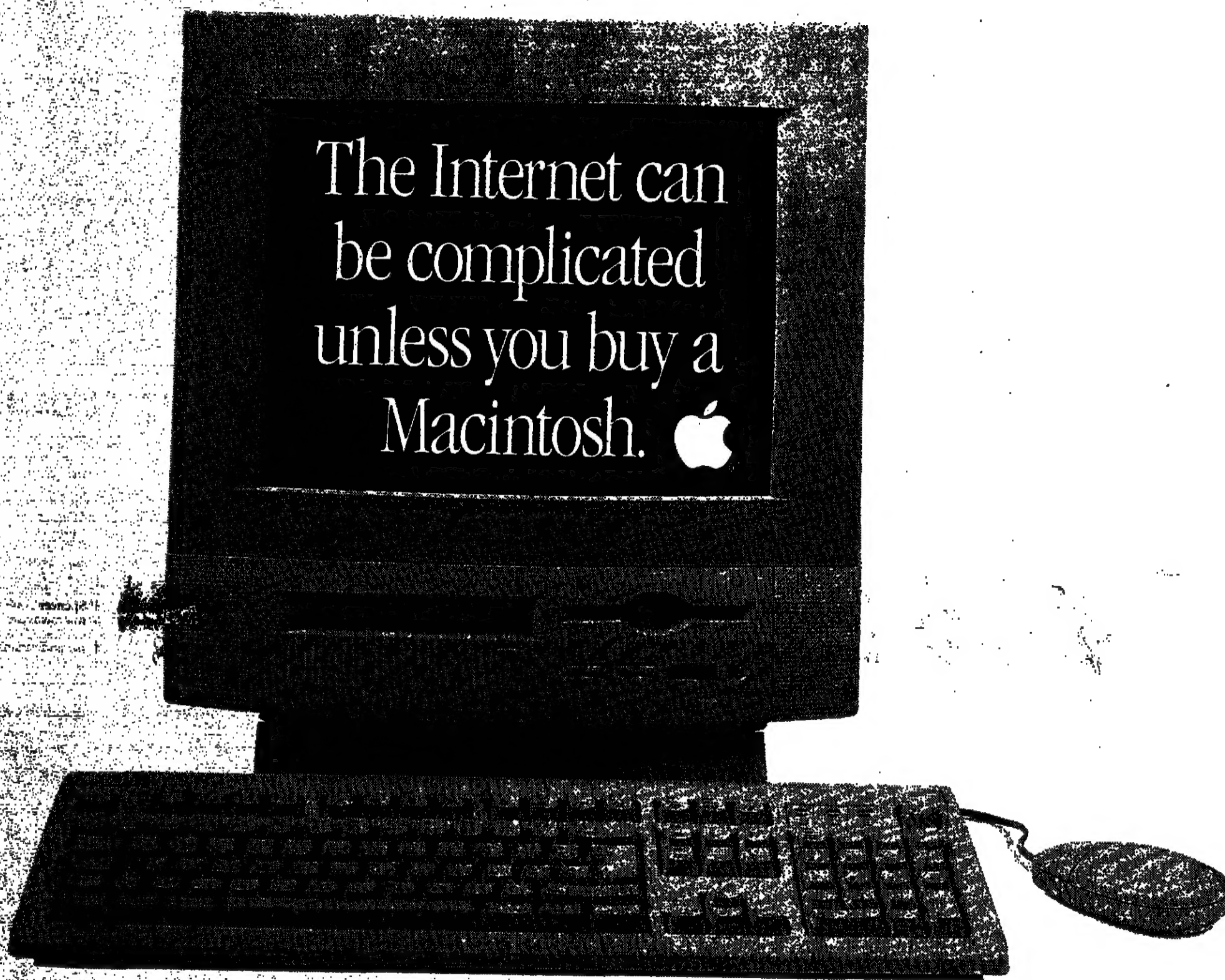
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Witchdoctor casts spell on Heathrow arrivals

BY JOANNA BALE

As the chief emerged from Customs, suitcase in one hand and spear — wrapped in airport security tape — in the other, he was besieged by camera crews, photographers, and journalists. Clearly delighted by the attention, he began waving the spear and

He then conducted an impromptu press conference at the end of the walkway for arriving passengers, while a queue of puzzled travellers built up behind him. Chief Gcaleka said in English that he was certain that he would find the head of King Hintsa, his great-great-uncle, which is thought to have been taken by a Scottish soldier during a battle against the Xhosa tribe in the Eastern Cape in 1835.

coming here we will bring our kingdom back to South Africa. I'm here on a spiritual search."

He said the head held the key to peace in South Africa, and he did nothing to dispel rumours that President Mandela, himself a Xhosa, had partly funded the two-week trip with £10,000 of his own money. "Mandela is with us!" he shouted.

Eventually two policemen, more concerned with security than the chief's quest, moved him and his media scrum outside.

As he walked bare-legged into the cold winter air, Chief Gcaleka refused to discuss the matter any further, saying:

"You will have to pay me money for more information." He was driven away in a black stretch limousine, a bottle of champagne at the ready, bound for a series of television interviews.

The trip, sponsored by two South African breweries, will involve searching museums in London and Scotland for clues to the whereabouts of the missing head. Chief Gcaleka said he believed it may be at Fort George, near Inverness, which was the base of the now defunct 72nd and 75th Highland regiments.

The chief's guide in Britain is Robert Pringle, 20, whose father is a close friend of the chiefs in South Africa. He said: "This is a great honour for me. My father was meant to come but could not make it."

Today the chief will meet the South African High Commissioner, Tilana Grobbelaar, a commission official, said at the airport: "We see it as his own spiritual mission, but we are monitoring his visit."

History does not record whether King Hintsa was decapitated, and there is no indication as to whether any remains were dispatched to Britain, although army surgeons of that era frequently sent home skulls and limbs for scientific study.

The search is likely to renew the debate about thousands of human remains held in collections throughout the country. The Natural History Museum in London alone has 17,000 body parts, including those of South African bushmen.

Costume drama: Chief Gcaleka's arrival in leopardskin at Heathrow yesterday caused a passenger pile-up in Terminal 2 as he gave an impromptu press conference.

Police fear a growing toll among heroin users after the deaths of two addicts in Derby were found to have been caused by lethally pure batches of the drug. Dealers have found they can still make large profits without diluting supplies. Addicts were warned to be cautious when buying supplies from unknown dealers.

Ayres on air

The comic poet Pam Ayres is taking over Charlie Chester's Sunday afternoon *Soapbox* slot on BBC Radio 2, which he started in 1969, from Frank Topping, who has been standing in since Chester. 52, had a stroke three months ago. He is recovering in hospital.

Only two of 11 formula milks for babies tested by scientists at South Bank University, London, provided enough selenium to meet the Health Department's recommendation of ten micrograms a day. The nutrient's effects include protection against heart disease and cancer.

A hunt was under way in the Omagh and Fintona areas of Co Tyrone for a lion believed to have escaped from a private collection. Police said there had been two apparent sightings. Legal controls on keeping dangerous animals do not extend to Northern Ireland.

Young men who are too shy to ask GPs or telephone helplines about issues such as testicular cancer and impotence will be able to ask via E-mail on the Internet in conjunction with a BBC2 series, *The Trouble With Men*, beginning next week.

The grass seed used for the pitch at Wembley stadium is to go on general sale. Johnsons says the blend of three varieties took years to perfect. The turf has been tested with a football boot simulator at the firm's headquarters in Boston, Lincolnshire.

Global warming 'will lead to war over water' in 21st century



Houghton: said UN would have to settle water disputes

BY NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

WAR will break out as global warming leads rival nations to fight for control of dwindling water supplies in the next century, the leading British climate scientist at the United Nations said yesterday.

Sir John Houghton, chairman of the UN body assessing global warming, predicted that British and UN forces would be deployed to keep armies and communities apart as they squabbled over rivers and lakes. He said the battles over the

world's water resources could dwarf those seen in the former Yugoslavia in severity and the numbers made homeless.

Sir John's views are supported by Admiral Sir Julian Oswald, a former Admiral of the Fleet. He says that the Royal Navy, RAF and the Army will, over the coming years, increasingly be used to police international environmental treaties designed to avert disasters and secure dwindling natural resources.

Sir Julian says in the book *Enemies Without Frontiers* that uncontrolled global warming "will

probably lead to a disastrous collision between traditional and environmental concerns... resulting in widespread conflict".

Sir John, a distinguished academic who is chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution and former chief executive of the UK Meteorological Office, was speaking after the agreement by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that rising global temperatures are at least partly due to man-made pollution. Scientists believe extreme and freakish weather, similar to that of recent years,

will become the norm in a globally warmed world.

Sir John, author of *Global Warming: the complete briefing*, told the Royal Society in London yesterday that demand for water had been rising, particularly where it was used for irrigation: "There are already significant tensions, especially in regions where the water from major river systems is shared between nations," said Sir John, who cited the rivers Nile, Jordan and Euphrates.

"I just hope governments, industry and the public can be sensible

and find solutions before they escalate into military action. You can be sure that military action in the next century will not be pretty."

Sir John's arguments have been given added urgency by the first study on the world's demand for fresh water. American researchers at Stanford University and the Global Water Policy Project in Cambridge, Massachusetts, estimate that 54 per cent of the world's available fresh water is being consumed by man. This will rise to 70 per cent by 2025 unless conservation policies are drafted.

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Granada swoops on Yorkshire IV

A high-contrast, black and white image showing a close-up of a person's face, heavily shadowed and distorted, possibly due to a camera effect or damage to the original document. The image is oriented vertically.

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Updated Racine gives Craig Raine a hit in 1953

EDUCATION 39

Does Jewish schooling really work?

SPORT 40-44

Why did boxing's weight watchers turn a blind eye?

TELEVISION AND RADIO
Pages 42, 43

THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 16 1996

Fall in inflation strengthens case for further rate cut

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH inflation fell below 3 per cent for the first time in more than a year, reinforcing what the City believes is the strengthening case for another cut in interest rates next month.

The headline retail prices index fell by 0.3 per cent in January compared with December, depressing the annual rate of inflation from 3.2 per cent to 2.9 per cent, the lowest it has been since December 1994.

The underlying inflation rate, which the Government aims to get to 2.5 per cent or below by the end of this Parliament, fell from 3 per cent to 2.6 per cent — its lowest level since last July. RPIY, the measure of inflation favoured by the Bank of England which excludes mortgage interest payments and indirect taxes, was stable at 2.5 per cent.

Stock market prices soared. The FT-SE 100 index came within a whisker of a record high, piling on 34.3 points to end at 3,779.8 on hopes of lower base rates. The record of 3,782.6 was set on February 2.

Together with recent news of falling producer prices and stable growth in average earnings, yesterday's figures backed up the Bank's judgement in its *Inflation Report* this week that it sees no sign of an imminent rise in price pressures.

The City concluded that there was no hurdle to another quarter-point cut in base rates at the March 7 monetary meeting. Andrew Cates, of UBS, the broker, said: "Over the past two weeks, almost every economic statistic could be used to justify a further cut in base rates. And the Governor of the Bank of England, at the moment it would seem, will not stand in the Chancellor's way."

The only question in the mind of analysts is whether the cut will follow the March meeting or a subsequent one. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, said on Wednesday that there was no case for recklessness in setting monetary policy and he may want to delay a little after cuts in December and January.

The Central Statistical Office said that record-breaking discounts in the January sales coupled with lower mortgage rates were responsible for the fall in inflation. Rate cuts by smaller building societies took just over 0.1 per cent off the headline rate of inflation on its own.

Prices of clothing and footwear fell by 5.6 per cent in January, the largest monthly fall since February 1992, when the rate of price rises was measured by the Cost of Living Index for the Working Classes. Household goods prices fell by 3 per cent in the month, the biggest decline in any month since comparable records began in 1950.

Further downward effects on inflation expected this month include an intensification of super-

market price wars, lower petrol prices and another mortgage rate cut. Against this, a rebound is expected in prices of household goods and clothing and footwear as new stocks come into the shops.

The Bank of England said on Wednesday that it expected inflation to drift downwards for most of this year before picking up again gently. It now expects underlying inflation to be somewhat below 2.5 per cent at the end of two years.

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City Diary, page 27

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City Diary, page 27

Pennington, page 25
City Diary, page 27

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FT-SE 100	3779.8	(+34.3)
FT-SE All share	1558.23	(+15.15)
Nikkei	20886.19	(+57.40)
Dow Jones	8587.14	(+7.52)
S&P Composite	655.21	(+0.63)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	87.5%	(4.7%)
Long Bond	88.5%	(10%)
Yield	6.11%	(5.05%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	5.75%	(5.75%)
Libor 6m	108.75	(108.75)
STERLING		
New York	1.5385	(1.5430)
London	1.5379	(1.5379)
Frankfurt	2.2599	(2.2599)
Paris	7.7325	(7.7770)
Switzerland	1.8444	(1.8415)
Yen	163.28	(164.13)
S index	84.2	(84.2)
DOLLAR		
London	1.4708	(1.4640)
Frankfurt	5.6331	(5.0455)
Paris	1.9938	(1.9955)
Yen	106.19	(106.15)
S index	84.2	(84.1)
Tokyo close Yen 108.58		
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$16.50	(\$17.15)
GOLD		
London close	\$408.55	(\$402.45)
* denotes midday trading price		

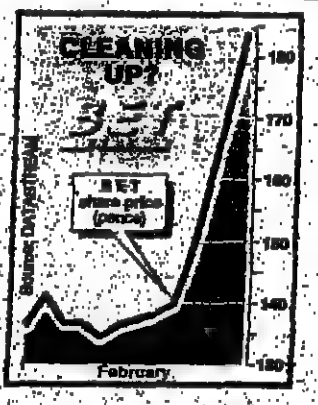
Rentokil's BET bid may lead to SE inquiry

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

RENTOKIL yesterday moved towards a £2 billion takeover of BET, the business services group, in what would be the biggest expansion by far of the rapidly growing pest-control and security services group.

A Stock Exchange inquiry is expected after strong City speculation over the move, and a leap in the price of BET shares fuelled by huge transactions on Wednesday and again yesterday before the formal approach at midday by Clive Thompson, chief executive of Rentokil.

On Wednesday, 28 million shares were traded in BET and yesterday 20 million of the 48.66 million shares dealt went through before Mr Thompson's 12.15 telephone call to Sir Christopher Harding, chairman of BET, which was then relayed to the Stock Exchange. The Exchange



would not comment on the transactions and price jump, up nearly 12 per cent this week ahead of the announcement.

Yesterday, BET's share price rose 34.3p to 184.5p, while Rentokil, which is likely to have to find a bid with a mixture of shares and cash, fell 26p to 336.5p.

BET's board meets today to discuss Rentokil's move. Both sides say that a price has not been discussed but analysts believe that Rentokil will have to offer about £2 a share to ensure the agreement of BET. Such an offer would value BET at just under £2 billion.

The move marks a sharp change of strategy for Rentokil, which has been buying up businesses after setting itself an ambitious annual growth target of 20 per cent. But Charles Grimaldi, Rentokil's corporate affairs director, said that the company was less attracted by the size of BET than by its make-up, which overlaps with the office services and distribution operations of its would-be predator.

"We have been watching BET for a number of years, partly because they are in our sector but also because we have been interested in how the company has been shaped by John Clark," he said.

Under Mr Clark, the chief executive, BET — which is involved in cleaning, distribution, catering and security — has been streamlined from 160 businesses to 60 and has been restored to financial health. Recently the company has moved towards acquisitions.

While the City absorbs Rentokil's proposed deal, which would propel the expanded company to true conglomerate status, there is some confidence that the move is a sensible one and that BET would offer Rentokil scope for margin improvement. Charles Spick, analyst with Panmure Gordon, said: "This will really test the mettle of Rentokil. Until now it has concentrated on fairly small additions. But there is admiration for its management and they should be able to push up margins."

Analysts vary on whether the deal would mean dilution of earnings for Rentokil. Some believe it may be executed without incurring any dilution, while others forecast the impact would be slight.

It is likely, however, that the shares — which until now have been very highly rated — would be reappraised. Rentokil shares are fairly tightly held, pushing up the rating, so a large issue of paper to fund a deal would lead to a re-rating and make them less attractive.

Rentokil, after aggressive expansion under Mr Thompson, is the world's largest pest-control company and largest global supplier of office plants.



Palmy days: Clive Thompson, Rentokil's chief executive, who formally announced the BET bid at midday yesterday

Granada swoops on Yorkshire TV

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

GRANADA yesterday made a £52 million share raid on Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television, taking its holding to nearly 24 per cent, but said that it was not intending to launch a full bid at this stage.

The raid, widely seen as an attempt by Granada to raise its stake in Yorkshire ahead of enactment of the Broadcasting Bill, prompted heavy trading in other media stocks as speculation grew over the next takeover candidate in the sector after last week's £3 billion merger between MAI and United News & Media.

Carlton was the big loser, down 27p to £10.29, as pressure grew on it to react to the moves made by its main rivals towards consolidation of television ownership. There had been speculation that Carlton might swap its stake in Meridian with the 14 per cent stake in Yorkshire owned by Meridian's parent company, MAI. MAI refused to comment yesterday on the future of its stake.

Granada bought 6.12 per cent of Yorkshire shares at £10 a share, taking its own stake to 20 per cent, the maximum

allowed by current broadcasting legislation. However, Granada also announced that a subsidiary owned with Lazards, Allouet Investments, had bought a further 3.88 per cent at the same price. Yorkshire shares soared 150p after the raid, to close at £10.17.

Granada's decision to "deslock" the 3.88 per cent stake was described by the Independent Television Commission as "within the letter but outside the spirit of the 1990 Broadcasting Act". Charles Allen, chief operating officer of Granada, said that he had cleared the deal with the ITC earlier in the day.

United News and MAI used a similar tactic to avoid ownership restrictions.

The situation should be clarified by the new Broadcasting Act, which will allow companies to take up to 15 per cent of the ITV market share.

Granada's move received a warm response from Yorkshire, which emphasised benefits of synergy between the two companies.

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Market Report, page 26

Tempus, page 26

British Gas challenged on contracts

By CARL MONTSHIED

EXECUTIVES at Royal Dutch Shell, the Anglo-Dutch oil company, yesterday cast doubt on the scale of the take-or-pay contracts problem facing British Gas and demanded that British Gas executives come up with a solution.

British Gas has said that it needs to renegotiate some £40 billion of contracts with oil companies struck at high prices. However, Chris Fay, chief executive of Shell UK, said yesterday that British Gas has yet to come up with a proposal. "The problem is indeed overstated," he said. "The issue is one of volume management, not of price."

Shell said it was charging British Gas well below the 20p per therm average price under all of British Gas's contracts. BP recently indicated that its contracts to British Gas averaged 16p. British Gas is believed to have accelerated production of high cost fields like its own Morecambe Bay, priced at 26p per therm.

Shell cuts, page 25
Tempus, page 26

Banks defend lending policy after Scott report

By PATRICIA TEHAN, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH banks were last night poring over the Scott report for any suggestion that their lending practices might have been at fault.

The Co-operative Bank says in full-page advertisements in several national newspapers today (see page 13) that while other banks may have used customers' money to help finance arms, it did not participate in this trade. The bank said: "Between 1981 and 1990, certain banks used hundreds of millions of pounds of their customers' money to finance the supply of arms to both Iran and Iraq. The Co-op Bank would like to offer reassurance to its customers that we did not, and will not finance the sale of arms to Iraq, Iran or any other oppressive regime."

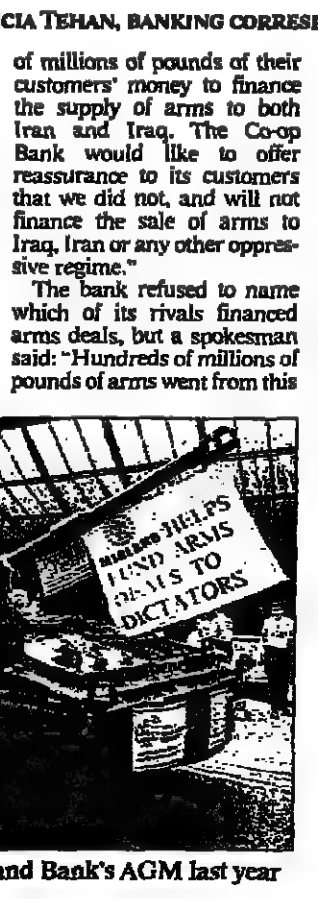
The bank refused to name which of its rivals financed arms deals, but a spokesman said: "Hundreds of millions of pounds of arms went from this country to Iraq and Iran. You cannot send arms of that kind of size of deal without a bank being involved."

NatWest said: "The NatWest Group has extensive relationships with major corporations in the UK and overseas, some of whose activities include armaments manufacture. We seek to be fully satisfied as to the integrity of these companies and their compliance with all legislation relevant to their activities."

Barclays said: "Barclays supports UK defence manufacturing companies and finances selected exports of defence goods, provided the transaction is approved and the goods licensed by the UK Government."

Midland said its policy is to only consider financing defence equipment which is manufactured in the UK and which qualifies for cover from the ECGD.

Scott reaction, pages 1-4
Peter Riddell, page 18
Simon Jenkins, page 18
Diary, page 18
Leading article, page 19
Extracts, pages 30-33



Protesters outside the Midland Bank's AGM last year

Pennington, page 25

Farnell wins approval to proceed with bid

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

FARNELL declared victory in its battle to proceed with a £1.8 billion bid for Premier, the American electronics distribution company, after securing a surprisingly comfortable majority of shareholder votes at its EGM yesterday.

Farnell won 94 per cent of the votes, safely above the 75 per cent it needed, in spite of opposition to the deal from two major institutional shareholders.

Standard Life and Legal and General, which control 35 per cent of the stock between them, had voiced reservations about the price and funding of the bid.

Standard Life said it remained concerned about the financial risks associated with the deal. However, the fund management group would not say whether it would now sell its stake in the company.

Pensions Investment Research Consultants, the corporate governance pressure group, said the EGM was a turning point in UK corporate governance. Anne Simpson, joint managing director, said: "PIRC welcomes the unprecedented level of shareholder voting... For too long, companies have assumed that shareholders will rubber-stamp their proposals."

Farnell still has to win approval from Premier shareholders, but with the support of the Mandel family, who control 54 per cent of the stock, that should prove a formality.

The company is proceeding with provisional allotment letters for its nine-for-19 rights issue immediately. Dealing in the new shares, which will be priced at 540p, starts today.

Pennington, page 25

Giotto, Brunelleschi, Bramante, Donatello, Raffaello, Leonardo, Botticelli, Masaccio, Mantegna, Michelangelo.

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Deep losses force Daimler to cut aerospace jobs

By ROSS TIEMAN
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

DAIMLER-BENZ AEROSPACE is to axe almost 18,000 jobs over the next three years after announcing deeper than expected losses of DM4.3 billion burdened by massive restructuring costs.

Manfred Bischoff, the chairman, said he was counting on further "Europeanisation" of the aerospace industry to help to restore the company's profitability. His remark appears to open the door to deeper collaboration with British Aerospace and

Aérospatiale of France. Dasa's chief partners in Airbus Industrie, the civil jet-builder.

Dasa is pushing for Airbus to play a bigger role in regional jets, where BAe has allied itself with Aerospatiale and Alenia of Italy in AIR. But it is also thought open to closer collaboration in military aircraft, where it partners BAe, Alenia and Casa of Spain on the Eurofighter warplane programme.

Herr Bischoff said Dasa was also open in principle to "implementable co-operation" between MTU, its aero-engine business, and BMW Rolls-Royce, a 50/50 joint venture that has just launched its first motor for business

and regional jets. But he added that legal problems — thought to centre upon MTU's close links with Rolls' arch-rival Pratt & Whitney of America — prevented this going ahead at the moment.

Dasa's losses have pushed its parent Daimler-Benz to record a loss of DM6 billion, the worst in German corporate history. The aerospace arm had been expected to lose DM4 billion. Of that, DM2.3 billion arises from the decision last month to cut off support for Fokker, the Dasa-controlled Dutch regional jet maker, which has since gone into administration.

The rest comprises losses arising from the strength of the mark against the US dollar, in which aircraft are priced, and restructuring charges. Of the job losses, 7,700 are accounted for by the Fokker withdrawal. There will be 600 previously announced programmes would account for 8,000 of the total.

The company said it would not abandon aerospace, but further disposals are expected. Top of the list is Dornier, the company's regional turboprop arm, where the Dornier family are contemplating exercising their right to buy out Daimler's interest.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Imro fines second Finlay firm £17,500

A CITY watchdog has fined a second company within the James Finlay banking group for serious rule breaches. Imro, the regulator for fund managers, yesterday fined James Finlay Investment Management (JFIM) £17,500, plus £23,500 in costs, for failing to keep proper records and for not supplying accurate information to Imro. The offences occurred between October 1992 and December 1994. On the charge of failing to provide accurate information, Imro said that JFIM stated that it carried out monitoring procedures on a regular basis and that compliance arrangements had been effective "when this was not the case".

Last November, Imro fined Warner Investment and Financial Services, also part of the James Finlay group, £80,000 — more than a year's worth of profits — and ordered it to pay £25,000 in costs. JFIM has £109 million of funds under management and some 2,000 customers. The company declined to comment yesterday.

Rom Data inquiry

OFFICERS involved in the joint investigation between the Serious Fraud Office and Devon and Cornwall police into Rom Data, the failed West Country computer company that crashed after receiving £850,000 of taxpayers' money, are to fly to Cork in the Irish Republic next week to interview two former directors, John Dawson and his wife Elizabeth. The police have completed interviewing former employees of Rom Data, many of whom were owed wages when the company collapsed.

Competitors sue AT&T

BELL ATLANTIC and DSC Communications have filed a \$3.5 billion lawsuit against AT&T, claiming that it monopolised the market for equipment, software and caller ID services. The companies allege that AT&T is delaying and preventing the use of interconnecting plugs needed by vendors such as DSC. AT&T is accused of "sabotaging" interface standards to connect other manufacturers' equipment to telephone switches. The lawsuit seeks to recover damages, including lost profits, for the period when AT&T was engaged in blocking information.

Hornby warning

HORNBY Group, the toy maker, said profits for the 15 months to March 31 would be below stock market expectations. This follows the disposal of Fletcher International Sports Boots, a loss-making subsidiary, for £315,000, giving rise to an asset write-off of £2.9 million and a £1.3 million charge against goodwill. Results would also be burdened by net provisions of £700,000 relating to the write-off of an investment in America and severance payments. Malcolm Thomas will step down as chairman. Peter Newey, chief executive, will succeed him.

Williams venture

WILLIAMS GROUP is to establish a joint venture in China between Yale Locks, part of its security products division, and Guangdong Gull Locks. The venture will manufacture more than 25 million locks a year and employ around 4,000 people. It will have an initial total investment of £35 million. Williams, which will have management control, will have a 45 per cent interest in the new company. Guangdong Gull will have 40 per cent interest and the American International Group will hold the final 15 per cent.

Unilever's Chilean deal

UNILEVER has agreed to buy Consorcio Agro-Industrial de Malloa, a Santiago food business, from a Chilean subsidiary of BAT Industries; Empressa CCT, for \$102 million in cash. Completion of the sale is expected by the end of this month. Malloa is one of Chile's leading food companies. It has 700 full-time employees producing and marketing tomato-based products and canned fruit and vegetables. Five companies are understood to have bid for the firm, with Empressa CCT narrowing the list to Unilever and Heinz.

Slough to sell in Sydney

SLOUGH ESTATES has exchanged conditional contracts to sell its four properties in Sydney for \$415 million (£57 million) to Equitable Property Trust, a fund managed by Colonial Mutual. The sale price of the 1.66 million sq ft is near to its book value, the company said. Slough Estates recently sold its Adelaide properties, raising \$13 million and will also soon sell its Melbourne properties. It will use the money to reinvest in the UK, continental Europe and North America where it said it sees "better opportunities to expand".

BTR \$80m acquisition

BTR, the UK engineering company, has acquired the vibration control division of America's GenCorp Inc for \$80 million. The division, a leading manufacturer of vibration control components for cars and light lorries, has annual turnover of more than \$150 million and employs about 1,200 people. It will form part of BTR's anti-vibration systems group, whose existing operations are in Brazil, Germany, Britain and Spain, establishing an enlarged group with turnover of \$550 million.

Saab reduces aircraft losses

SAAB, the Swedish aircraft maker that has teamed with British Aerospace to offer its JAS 39 Gripen fighter in export markets, cut losses from Kr22 million to Kr254 million (£33.1 million) last year.

The improvement was aided by increased revenues from defence, as the Gripen programme shifted into the production phase. Some 14 of the single-engine, high-agility jets have now been delivered to the Swedish Air Force.

But the civil aircraft side, building the high-speed, 50-seat Saab 340 turboprop, continued to lose money. Group sales totalled 63 per cent ahead at Kr7.92 billion.

	Bank	Days	Rate
Australia \$	2.14	1.38	
Austria Sch	18.28	15.38	
Belgium Fr	46.44	46.44	
Canada C	2.290	2.070	
Cyprus Cyp	0.785	0.708	
Denmark Kr	2.35	2.35	
Finland Mk	7.25	6.98	
France F	2.18	2.24	
Germany Dr	2.41	2.20	
Greece Dr	382.00	382.00	
Hong Kong \$	15.53	11.55	
Ireland Ir	1.02	0.94	
Israel Sh	5.100	4.500	
Italy Lit	2550.00	2550.00	
Japan Yen	177.10	161.10	
Malta M	0.26	0.26	
Netherlands Gld	2.681	2.481	
New Zealand \$	2.45	2.21	
Norway Kr	1.48	1.48	
Portugal Esc	248.00	227.00	
S Africa Rd	6.17	5.27	
Spain Ptas	161.00	161.00	
Sweden Kr	11.25	10.25	
Switzerland Fr	1.97	1.97	
Turkey Lira	8881.00	9474.00	
USA \$	1.538	1.408	

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STRONGUARD SECURITY INSTALLATIONS

N&P to name other bidders balked by £1.35bn Abbey deal

By PATRICIA TEHAN
BANKING CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL & Provincial Building Society is to publish the names of the five banks and building societies it held talks with before agreeing to a £1.35 billion takeover by Abbey National.

Five names are in a document to be sent out to its members next month. Abbey is top of the list, along with a detailed section explaining why the society felt that Abbey's was the best deal for members. The other names, some of which have never confirmed their interest in N&P, are understood to be Nationwide, Alliance & Leicester, Woolwich & Cheltenham & Gloucester, which is owned by Lloyds Bank.

Alastair Lyons, chief executive of N&P, said yesterday that, under the Building Societies Act, the society is required to identify organisations that submitted written proposals. He refused to say how many organisations would be named or what the names were.

Members will vote on the £1.35 billion takeover by Abbey National at a special meeting in the middle of



Alastair Lyons, N&P chief executive, who will brief members on Abbey decision

April, and the deal is expected to be completed in August. N&P and Cheltenham & Gloucester unveiled their results for 1995 yesterday. Both revealed that there had been substantial growth in lending figures in spite of what they

both described as a subdued and highly competitive market. N&P reported a 39.5 per cent leap in pre-tax profits to £187 million after the £8 million exceptional cost of fees in connection with the Abbey National deal.

It pushed its net and gross mortgage shares to 2.9 per cent, compared with 0.1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively in 1994. Mr Lyons said that remortgaging accounted for 25 per cent of business, with the rest achieved as a result of a

new range of mortgage products. He added that he expected the housing market to remain subdued, which meant a competitive mortgage market this year.

C&G, which was taken over by Lloyds Bank in August last year, pushed its share of net lending from 4.2 per cent to 10 per cent. Andrew Longhurst, chief executive, said that this was mostly due to cash offers, no valuation fees and a price promise. C&G had started its mortgage sales in Lloyds branches at the end of the year and hoped that the impact of this would be felt this year.

C&G now sells in 2,000 branches compared with 200 before its acquisition. Mr Longhurst said that following the takeover of TSB by Lloyds, C&G would be selling in 3,000 branches by the end of 1996. This would enable C&G to distribute mortgages to a larger customer base at modest extra cost, he added.

Profits before tax for the five months to December were £838 million. On a pro-forma basis for 1995, C&G's profits were up from £219.2 million to £246.7 million, in spite of an increase in bad debt provisions from £31.8 million to £43.7 million.

Lloyds unveils its 1995 figures today.

PowerGen is seeking deal for Scottish coal

By OUR CITY STAFF

POWERGEN, the electricity generator, is believed to be negotiating the purchase of up to one million tonnes of coal a year from Scotland.

The deal with Mining Scotland would account for a fifth of the country's coal production. PowerGen would take a minimum 600,000 tonnes a year, with options for more, to be shipped by rail to the Fiddler's Ferry and Ferrybridge power stations in Merseyside and Yorkshire.

Mining Scotland, based in Edinburgh, operates the Longannet pit and several

open-cast mines. The company declined to reveal any details of a possible deal with PowerGen, but a spokesman said: "It is no secret we have been talking to them, but there is no ink to dry."

PowerGen was also right-lipped yesterday and would only say: "We cannot comment on contracts with suppliers, which are covered by commercial confidentiality clauses."

At present, most of Mining Scotland's output goes to Scottish Power's Longannet power station in Fife.

Emotional extremes hurt Europe debate, says CBI

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Confederation of British Industry yesterday attacked "emotional extremes" over Europe and called for a balanced argument over the issues that affect UK business.

The CBI insisted that business interests must not be lost in the heated political debate about proposals for European economic and monetary union and Britain's place in Europe.

Adair Turner, Director-General of the CBI, called on business to focus on the key issues it faced over Europe

and to avoid the emotional extremes clouding the subject.

Speaking in London to the European Movement Business Forum, Mr Turner warned against approaching the issue of Europe "with either a strong idealist vision which seeks integration as an end in itself or with an aggressively anti-European stance, which exploits present difficulties in some continental countries to cast doubt on the benefits UK membership of the EU has brought".

Mr Turner said: "Between

Euro-sceptic glee that Europe faces problems, and the Euro-fanatic speak that unless everything goes ahead as per Maastricht, then we slip back towards a divided continent, there's a real danger that the voice of balance and reason gets lost. But it is vital that that voice is heard."

Even if European monetary union did not go ahead in 1999, it would not mean the end of the European single market or prevent proceeding with EMU at a later date, he said.

BR company sold to Scots buyout team

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

MANAGERS and employees of British Rail's track maintenance company in Scotland have bought the business.

The buyout, the largest rail privatisation north of the border so far, was hailed by the Government as a "significant milestone" in the transformation of the railways.

The Scotland Infrastructure Maintenance Company, which employs about 2,400 people, carries out engineering work on some 2,600 miles of track, including the Forth Bridge.

John Wans, minister for railways and roads, said: "This is another important moment in the revolution of Britain's railways."

"The sale of the British Rail Infrastructure Services is a crucial element of the rail privatisation programme."

Wheels in motion for Scania flotation

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SCANIA, the world's fourth-largest truckmaker and UK market leader in heavy lorries, is to be floated off by its Swedish parent with a price tag of between £2.8 billion and £3.7 billion.

The sale of a 70 per cent stake by Investor, the industrial colossus controlled by the Wallenberg family, will be among the largest non-privatisation flotations attempted.

World demand for trucks over 16 tonnes, in which Scania specialises, appears to have peaked. But Scania has just completed the renewal of its model range and is rapidly increasing market share.

Last year, it sold 44,600 trucks and buses worldwide, an increase of 33 per cent. In

Britain, its biggest market after Brazil, Scania sold 5,380 lorries, to take third place in the 16-tonnes-plus segment. But in January it overtook Volvo and Leyland DAF to take first place.

The company's net income during 1995 was Kr3.28 billion (£306 million), a 28 per cent rise on sales which were ahead 13 per cent to Kr34.9 billion (£3.26 billion).

In Europe, its biggest single market, Scania last year lifted its market share from 12.8 per cent to 14.7 per cent. The company has assembly plants in Holland, Sweden and France. It is also a big player in Latin America, manufacturing in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico.

Court told of Nadir money movements

By JON ASHWORTH

ASIL NADIR and his wealthy associates used Polly Peck International (PPI), to transfer millions of pounds in personal funds from northern Cyprus to Britain, a court heard yesterday.

Money paid locally to Unipac, a packaging subsidiary, was matched in London by PPI, which credited the funds in sterling to UK bank accounts. Turkish lira held on deposit in northern Cyprus accumulated interest at rates as high as 100 per cent, contributing vast sums to PPI.

Details of the money transfers emerged on the third day of the trial of Elizabeth Forsyth, former financial adviser to Mr Nadir. Mrs Forsyth, 59, denies two counts of handling £400,000 in stolen funds.

Lawrence Tindale, one of four non-executive directors of PPI, told the court that the board agreed to the transfers on the basis that funds were equally matched. The Turkish lira was a "soft" currency at the mercy of high rates of inflation, and people in northern Cyprus "wanted to get their money out". They deposited large amounts of lira into local bank accounts and received the equivalent from a PPI subsidiary in London.

Mr Tindale told the jury that the sums had sometimes run into millions of pounds. Those involved included members of the Nadir family and other local businessmen.

The court heard that interest on funds available to Unipac provided "substantial" profits, which were fed into the PPI accounts. The catch was that there was no certainty that interest payments would be honoured.

The court heard that Mr Tindale and his fellow directors had spent several months trying to tackle a "shortage of cash" at PPI, in the months before the group went into administration in October 1990. The trial continues.

'PPI used to transfer millions'

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

□ Farnell debate highlights fund managers' dilemma □ Further price falls in prospect □ Granada's swoop is the prelude to a bid

Standard bearer for change

THE paradox that arises from the scrap over a fairly insignificant Yorkshire distributor of electronic components is that the decision by some City institutions to break cover comes after years of criticism for their supine and unprincipled behaviour.

Time after time, especially on issues like executive pay and share options and at annual meetings such as British Gas last year, the private shareholders have been baying for management blood. But the institutions have always, with apologies to Cedric the pig, saved their bacon.

Now some of those bodies have come forward for the first time to push their views in public and have been criticised for it. With all due respect to Farnell's US ambitions, this is the most interesting aspect of the battle to force through the £1.8 billion bid for Premier.

Standard Life's decision to go public with its opposition to the deal was an attempt to head off yet another rubber-stamping exercise. For this the Scottish institution deserves a double vote of thanks from shareholders, for not only raising the level of the debate about the deal itself but also bringing the whole issue of institutional accountability back on the City's agenda.

The selective use of publicity, as practised by Standard Life and Mercury Asset Manage-

ment at the close of the Fort Granada bid, is not a solution to the problems of transparency in itself. In many ways it creates a situation that is more confusing for companies and shareholders, with certain institutions employing tactical releases of information to bolster their positions while others adhere religiously to the old traditions of secrecy.

There is a risk that this will lead to powerful institutions "steamrolling" decisions, a practice that companies themselves are banned from using. The obvious alternative, obliging all institutions to go public, is not a sensible course of action either.

Any regulatory measures would face bitter opposition from the institutions, fearful that breaking the bond of confidentiality with companies would undermine the system of nods and winks that allows them privileged information. It is also impractical: large institutions have to react to hundreds of deals, bids and results every day, and to justify every one would be a horribly time consuming.

But some fund managers, such

as Standard Life, are groping towards a viable solution. They say an annual statement of aims by an institution would provide a yardstick by which investors could measure the actions of fund managers.

Inevitably the statement would need to be inclusive, but it would allow investors to demand explanations of subsequent behaviour that apparently contravened that stated policy. The mundane day-to-day decision-taking could carry on as before, but institutions would become increasingly accountable for their more controversial actions.

Bargaining power

KENNETH Clarke is relying heavily on British consumers to restore the "feel-good" factor and his party's electoral fortunes, but whether they can deliver the goods is still one of the most contentious economic issues around.

Mervyn King, the Bank of England's director of economics,



this week succinctly described the chasm between two different types of consumer. There is the individual still burdened with the high levels of debt left over from the 1980s whose income has barely kept up with inflation, low as this has been, and who may perhaps also be suffering from negative equity. But there are also those lucky souls who will benefit from large one-off payments as their building societies are taken over or from a manuring Tessa and suddenly enjoy some serious disposable income.

Whether Mr Clarke succeeds in getting the 3 per cent growth he has forecast will depend on which group proves more powerful. But one thing is undeniable. The British consumer is getting

value for money like never before because of a Mexican wave of competition rolling across all areas of retailing. January's headline inflation rate fell to its lowest level for more than a year partly because of vicious price competition between electrical goods retailers.

Inflation is likely to fall even further in February as the temperature of the petrol and super-market price wars heats up another notch. As soon as the Government slaps extra duty on petrol, so suppliers seem to match it with discounts. A cut of four to five pence a litre, an estimate from the Central Statistical Office in February, should take 0.3 per cent off headline inflation for that month.

And then there are the supermarkets. After a demolition derby of price cutting in January, more is to come. One chain is offering another bonus month, another is promising 1996 prices to its customers. And the retail prices index doesn't even pick up those savings earned through loyalty cards. With building societies cutting mortgage rates to win market share and insur-

ers turned into efficiencies by the success of outfits like Direct Line, there seems no end to the benefits to be enjoyed by consumers. But will it all be enough at the polling booths?

Programme trading

THE elaborate car's cradle that connects the various independent television contractors was always going to have to be disentangled one day. Granada's dawn raid on Yorkshire is in the nature of a pre-emptive sword stroke across those strings.

The permutations were endless — witness the heated speculation when dealers learned of the dawn raid but not the identity of the raider. Was it Carlton, grabbing a chunk of Yorkshire ahead of a deal with MAI that would swap Carlton's remaining shares in Meridian, where MAI has the majority, for MAI's 14 per cent of Yorkshire? Alternatively, if it was Granada buying, would this prompt Carlton to go for MAI, scuppering last week's merger

with United News & Media?

Anyone still following this should be aware that there are at least two other ITV contractors also up for grabs and with large stakes held elsewhere, Scottish and HTV. What this frantic activity is all about is taking positions ahead of this summer's relaxation of rules on TV ownership, which will allow any one company to own 15 per cent of the audience including satellite, cable and the BBC, and preparing for the next franchise round.

The big TV companies, like the Sunday retailers a couple of years ago, have decided that if the law is going to change, they might as well anticipate this and get in before the competition. MAI and United needed a parking orbit for the Express titles ahead of relaxation of cross-media ownership rules; Granada has likewise warehoused for now the small percentage of Yorkshire shares it is not yet allowed to own, but this is still a takeover waiting to happen.

This is all of doubtful morality, and the Independent Television Commission for one is far from pleased. As to the 1999 franchise round, Granada and Yorkshire combined would be making almost half of all the programmes supplied to the ITV network, a commanding position. No one ever accused Gerry Robinson of not thinking ahead.

Shell ready to make big cuts in capacity

By OUR CITY STAFF

SHELL, Europe's largest oil refiner, is considering a reduction in capacity of about 30 per cent through closures and disposals.

John Jennings, chairman of Shell Transport and Trading, said yesterday a restructuring of the company's refineries "is a serious and high priority issue". Discussions "had reached a delicate stage".

Industry analysts believe the Berre, France refinery, the smaller of Shell's two plants in France, could be closed. In the UK, a reduction in capacity would be most likely to affect Shellhaven, with capacity to process 92,000 barrels of crude per day (bpd). The larger Stanlow refinery, with capacity of 262,000 bpd, is likely to be preserved.

Shell is Europe's largest refiner, with regional capacity of more than 1.6 million bpd through 12 refineries, just ahead of Exxon Corp. British Petroleum has already taken action to reduce overcapacity in refining and Mr Jennings said he expected the pressure on worldwide refining margins to continue.

Yesterday Shell reported a

£300 million rise in net income to a record £4.4 billion for 1995, although fourth-quarter income was reduced to £851 million from £1,117 billion because of a downturn in chemicals and rising supply costs. The total dividend rises to 33.3p from 27.1p on earnings per share of 47.8p against 45p in 1994.

Manufacturing, marine and marketing earnings had been affected by depressed profit margins throughout the year, the group said. Crude oil production of 2.3 million barrels a day was 3 per cent higher than in 1994, and natural gas sales were up 4 per cent. The group remains optimistic about prospects. Crude oil production is expected to increase, with higher oil volumes planned in Europe and in the US, where new developments in the Gulf of Mexico will more than offset declines from maturing onshore fields, Shell said.

Crude oil prices last year were on average \$1.25 a barrel higher than in 1994.

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City Diary, page 27

Port dispute sees Mersey Docks slip

A PROLONGED and bitter industrial dispute at the Port of Liverpool has so far cost Mersey Docks and Harbour Company £4 million and contributed to a decline in pre-tax profits to £31.7 million from £33.6 million in 1995 (Martin Barrow writes).

Industrial action began when 80 men dismissed from an independent stevedoring company established a picket line, which 329 Mersey Docks port workers refused to cross. They were dismissed and a new workforce was recruited. The original workers subsequently rejected an £8 million settlement package.

Pre-tax profits were further affected by a £3.3 million loss at Eurolink, Mersey's ferry operation. Earnings fell to 24.48p a share from 25.33p, with a final dividend of 7.55p for a total of 11.5p, rising from 10.5p.

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Airtours in £60m acquisition

AIRTOURS, the UK's second largest tour operator, has acquired Simon Spies Holdings, which has a 40 per cent share of the Danish holiday market, for a total of £60 million (Marianne Corbrey writes).

It is also expected to make an announcement soon on a deal with Carnival Corp, America's largest cruise company, which will lead to Carnival taking a stake of up to 30 per cent in Airtours.

Spies' tour business and hotels were bought from Consolidated Aircraft by Airtours' subsidiary company Scandinavian Leisure Group for £10 million in cash. It also spent £50 million on aircraft and assets which had previously been leased.

Spies carried 570,000 passengers last year, and in the 12 months to December 31 made an operating profit of £600,000.

Philips gives warning in spite of record

FROM MARK FULLER IN EINDHOVEN

PHILIPS yesterday reported record net earnings and sales in 1995, but gave warning that its consumer electronics business was still in the doldrums.

Net profit on ordinary activities rose to 2,684 billion guilders (£1.06 billion) last year from £1,249 billion, on turnover 6 per cent higher at £164.5 billion.

Jan Timmer, the president, who will be succeeded by Cor Boonstra in October, said the results were "a nice leaving gift for an old man who has worked hard". The group was particularly satisfied with a 16

per cent rise in earnings per share, he said.

The record results reflected growth at the components and semiconductors division, where operating profit rose £1,600 million to £1,22 billion, and a strong performance in lighting. Consumer electronics, accounting for roughly one third of turnover, saw operating profit decline by £1,331 million to £1,118 million. Losses at Grundig, the German subsidiary, and continuing price erosion in Europe prevented a recovery in this division. Tempos, page 26

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Rate cut pressure pushes shares near all-time high

MOUNTING pressure for a cut in interest rates sent share prices to within a whisker of their all-time high. The FT-SE 100 index closed at its best of the day at 3,779.8, a rise of 34.8, in spite of a lacklustre performance overnight on Wall Street. Turnover reached more than 800 million shares.

It followed further bullish news for Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, with inflation below 3 per cent in January. Dealers said it provided evidence that there was further scope for a cut in interest rates. Initial reaction to the findings of the Scott inquiry was also favourably received.

BET, the cleaning, security and building services group, surged 34½p to a new high of 184½p after Rentokil confirmed market whispers that it had approached the company with a view to making an agreed bid. City speculators claim Rentokil will have to pay around £100 a share, valuing BET at £1.9 billion. The size of the bid means the terms are expected to be a mixture of cash and shares.

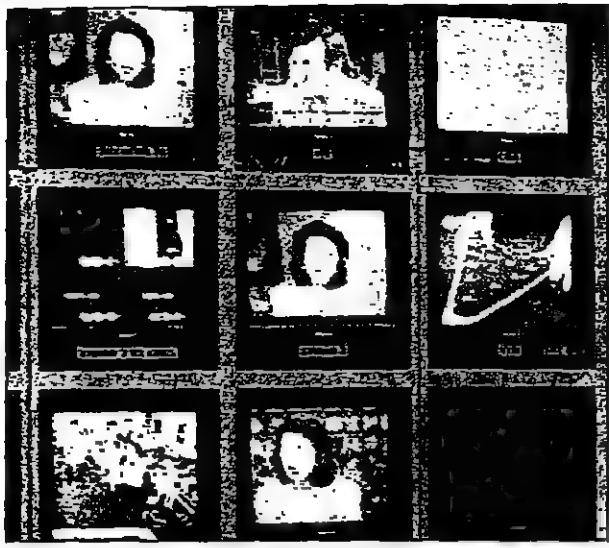
Rentokil shares responded with a fall of 26p to 336½p, with brokers worried about the expected earnings decline. Clive Thompson, chief executive, has set himself a target of at least 20 per cent earnings growth per annum.

Brokers were alerted to the possibility of a bid for BET by the high level of turnover in its shares. An inquiry by the Stock Exchange is expected to be launched into possible insider trading.

Granada extended its recent spending spree by spending £31.8 million on increasing its stake in Yorkshire-Tyne Tees Television. In a dawn raid carried out by ABN Amro Hoare Govett and BZW it picked up a further 3.15 million shares, or 6.12 per cent of the company, at £10 a share. A joint venture company controlled by Granada and Lazard Brothers also picked up 2 million shares, amounting to 3.88 per cent.

Yorkshire responded to the move with a leap of 150p to £10.17, with the warrants adding 150p to 82½p. The move increases Granada's direct holding from 13.87 per cent to almost 20 per cent.

Granada emphasised it was not poised to make a full bid unless someone else moved. Brokers said it was a blocking motion designed to deter other bidders, while it is in the



TV companies benefited from Granada's shares raid yesterday

process of disposing of the luxury hotels it inherited from Forte. Granada finished 9½p dearer at 734½p.

The move by Granada focused speculative attention on the rest of the media sector, with Scottish Television 57p higher at 665p, Pearson 37p at 706p, BSkyB 7p dearer at 391p, Mirror Group 6p dearer at 209p, and Golden

CRH traded at a peak of 515p after addressing about 40 fund managers at building products seminar arranged by Kleinwort Benson, the broker. Harry Sheridan, finance director, says the group will continue to achieve its target of 15 per cent earnings growth and 12 per cent dividend growth per annum.

Rose 11p better at 64p. MAI, which last week agreed a £2.9 billion merger with United News & Media, jumped 24p to 44p, with the speculators still holding out for another company to bid. United News was 7p better at 639p.

Bed speculation was also revived in Yorkshire Electricity where the price stood out with a rise of 17p to 733p as more than 1.5 million shares

changed hands. Merrill Lynch Smith New Court, the broker, was said to be an aggressive buyer. Yorkshire is one of the few remaining electricity distributors not to have received a bid approach. The others include East Midlands, 3p firmer at 748p.

Shire Pharmaceuticals enjoyed a spectacular stock market debut with the shares climbing above the 200p level in first-time trading. The group, which specialises in prescription medicines for age-related diseases, ended at 218p, a premium of 43p over the original placing price of 175p. By the close 6.54 million shares had changed hands.

There was a distinct sign of relief reverberating around Wetherby after Farnell Elec-

tronics was given the go-ahead to proceed with its proposed £1.8 billion acquisition of Premier Industries in the US. An extraordinary general meeting voted 84 per cent in favour of allowing the bid to proceed. There had been resistance from institutional shareholders, who felt the group was paying too much. Farnell

firmly 2p to 639p. Abbey National climbed 22p to 613p, cheered by some bumper profits from the National & Provident Building Society with which it is to merge shortly. Lloyds TSB also added 11p at 347p, supported by five-month results from Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society showing pre-tax profits up from £12.4 million to almost £20 million.

A downturn in fourth-quarter profits left Shell nursing a fall of 12½p to 860p. As with BP earlier this week, a firmer crude oil price was countered by a slump in profits from its chemicals division, and rising supply costs in its downstream activities. As a result net income during the year fell from £4.37 billion to £4 billion. But Shell offset the disappointment over the profits setback with a 28 per cent hike in the payout to 20.4p. BP ended 4p cheaper at 534p.

William Jacks continued to reel from Wednesday's profits warning with a fall of 15p to 38p. The group forecast a final figure of at least £600,000, down from £795,000 last time.

Hornby, the model railway group, has disposed of its loss-making sports boat business. This helped offset news of a profits warning and lifted the shares 17p to 170p.

GLT-EDGED: Prices closed mixed with support directed at the year-end level on hopes of a rate cut. Longer-dated issues finished a touch softer where changed. Brokers said the inflation fall had been anticipated but was still considered positive. In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt firmed three ticks to close at £108¼, as £2,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2013 slipped a tick to £100, while in shorts Treasury 8 per cent 2000 added £¼ to £104½.

IN NEW YORK: A rally in IBM shares kept the Dow industrials higher in what would otherwise have been a flat morning's trading. At midday the Dow Jones industrial average was up 7.59 points, at 5,587.14.

FTSE 100: 3,779.8 (+34.8) Previous open: 3,745.0 FTSE 250: 1,111.1 (+11.1) Previous open: 1,100.0 Three Month Sterling: 94.16 (+0.02) Previous open: 94.14

Three Month Eurodollar: 3.675 (+0.005) Previous open: 3.670 Three Month Euro DM: 3.675 (+0.005) Previous open: 3.670 Long Gilts: 108.125 (+0.005) Previous open: 108.120 Japanese Govt Bond: 108.125 (+0.005) Previous open: 108.120

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tronic was given the go-ahead to proceed with its proposed £1.8 billion acquisition of Premier Industries in the US. An extraordinary general meeting voted 84 per cent in favour of allowing the bid to proceed. There had been resistance from institutional shareholders, who felt the group was paying too much. Farnell

firmly 2p to 639p. Abbey National climbed 22p to 613p, cheered by some bumper profits from the National & Provident Building Society with which it is to merge shortly. Lloyds TSB also added 11p at 347p, supported by five-month results from Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society showing pre-tax profits up from £12.4 million to almost £20 million.

A downturn in fourth-quarter profits left Shell nursing a fall of 12½p to 860p. As with BP earlier this week, a firmer crude oil price was countered by a slump in profits from its chemicals division, and rising supply costs in its downstream activities. As a result net income during the year fell from £4.37 billion to £4 billion. But Shell offset the disappointment over the profits setback with a 28 per cent hike in the payout to 20.4p. BP ended 4p cheaper at 534p.

William Jacks continued to reel from Wednesday's profits warning with a fall of 15p to 38p. The group forecast a final figure of at least £600,000, down from £795,000 last time.

Hornby, the model railway group, has disposed of its loss-making sports boat business. This helped offset news of a profits warning and lifted the shares 17p to 170p.

GLT-EDGED: Prices closed mixed with support directed at the year-end level on hopes of a rate cut. Longer-dated issues finished a touch softer where changed. Brokers said the inflation fall had been anticipated but was still considered positive. In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt firmed three ticks to close at £108¼, as £2,000 contracts were completed. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2013 slipped a tick to £100, while in shorts Treasury 8 per cent 2000 added £¼ to £104½.

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 5,587.14 (+7.59) S&P Composite 696.21 (+0.43)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 22,800.00 (+27.40) Hang Seng 11,471.81 (+107.35)

Amsterdam: AEX Index 511.16 (+0.43) SOE Index 511.16 (+0.43)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2,288.5 (+2.3) ASX 2,288.5 (+2.3)

Frankfurt: DAX 3,630.01 (+4.04) DAX 3,630.01 (+4.04)

Singapore: Straits Times 2,694.21 (+57.43) Straits Times 2,694.21 (+57.43)

Brussels: C20 Index 673.29 (+15.41) C20 Index 673.29 (+15.41)

Paris: CAC-40 1,964.21 (+7.83) CAC-40 1,964.21 (+7.83)

Zurich: SMI Index 730.40 (+0.30) SMI Index 730.40 (+0.30)

London: FT 3,779.8 (+34.8) FT 3,779.8 (+34.8)

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TEMPUS

Rats on the treadmill

HAVING made a name for itself catching rats and mice, Rentokil wants to pursue bigger game but investors would probably be better off without trophies. No-one can accuse Rentokil of reluctance when it comes to making acquisitions. The group, chalked up an impressive growth record acquiring dull, badly run service businesses and squeezing more profit out of them by raising prices and service levels.

However, BET is no more than another collection of service businesses, not noticeably underperforming. A likely price of £1.9 billion — assuming the bid is to have BET's blessing — will certainly mean that Rentokil will have to issue some paper. The question is whether that paper will carry the high value that Rentokil's shares enjoy.

Rentokil has impressive management skills

and its track record of improving the margins of its new businesses is so far unbroken. But the ambitious target of 20 per cent per annum growth makes the company a hostage to fortune and such goals cannot be won indefinitely. BET does make sense for Rentokil: there is scope for margin improvement in the business and room for streamlining. However, BET had already embarked upon the job with plans for disposal of some businesses and add higher value operations.

Acquisition of BET will propel Rentokil firmly into the conglomerate stakes. BET shareholders stand to gain a premium but it is less clear how Rentokil will reward its own shareholders who will demand a premium from the larger group. If they are to be satisfied, Rentokil may have embarked on a Hanson-like treadmill.

Shell Transport

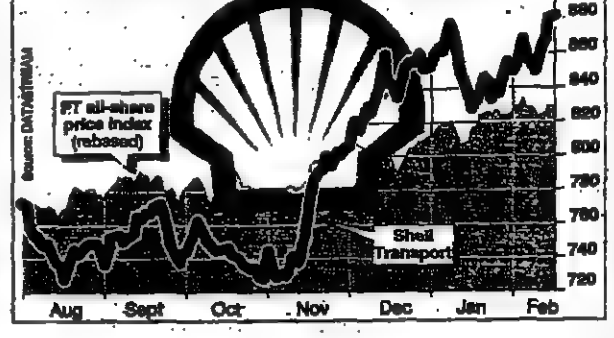
SHELL seemed to be talking about two different companies yesterday. On the one hand, it raised the dividend a whopping 23 per cent, indicated an increase of capital expenditure to £8 billion and spoke confidently of a 15 per cent return on capital target.

Yet the same company reported appalling fourth-quarter results. Profits from chemicals were decimated and the outlook for refining and marketing remains bleak. Shell's upstream businesses are not replacing the oil and gas pumped out of the ground at an ever more rapid rate, and the whole operation is earning a meagre return of 10.6 per cent.

The increased payout looks defensive rather than an emblem of confidence and will take up more than 70 per cent of earnings.

While Shell has the cash — some £7 billion of liquid funds — to maintain high levels of dividend, much of it has been generated from disposals rather than profits from operations. Over the past five years the oil company has shed assets worth about £4 billion.

If Shell was really keen to raise its rate of return, it



Philips

THE only disappointment in Philips' results was the performance of the consumer electronics sector, where sales rose slightly but operating income plummeted.

Philips put most of the blame on the continued weakness in its Grundig unit, which was hit by low demand and continuing price pressure in Europe. Fortunately for Philips, and for its shareholders, it is already doing something about the loss-making Grundig. Earlier this month it planned to lay off some 3,000 workers, about a quarter of its staff. Philips also said that from next year it will no longer automatically plug Grundig's losses. It has done so since 1984 because of an agreement struck with the Grundig family in exchange for their 32 per cent stake.

Jan Timmer, Philips' chairman, said yesterday, at his last results announcement before he stands down

in October, that Grundig may break even next year. Failure will leave Philips with a stark choice. It will have to sell the Grundig stake, or it will have to once again move production out of expensive Germany and into other, cheaper, countries.

However, good Philips' results in other areas, it cannot go on reporting disasters in a core business.

Mersey Docks

WITHOUT the labour dispute, Mersey Docks shares would be a strong buy. Tonnage figures released yesterday indicate that the port is bustling and, but for the six-week shutdown, container traffic would have been up 14 per cent because of two new customers.

Port traffic gently grows with the rate of increase in GDP, but the real story behind the growth of the larger ports groups is the gradual takeover of business from small ports and joint venture

developments with customers. Britain is overserved with small ports, but the abolition of the Dock Labour Scheme has enabled the large ports, such as Southampton and Liverpool, to invest in new terminals and build storage facilities for customers.

Mersey Docks invested £42 million last year in its ports, including phase one of the Sheerness produce terminal. The new facilities at Medway showed up at once in a boost in fruit tonnage.

More investment is planned at Liverpool, including a new terminal for Irish Sea traffic at Trafigal Docks.

The strike has enabled Mersey Docks to improve productivity at its container terminal, an unfortunate irony for the sacked dockers. Earnings could grow in double digits this year, and Mersey Docks is hoping its former employees may still take the settlement on offer. The shares are worth buying.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

COFFEE: Mar 920.00 (+10.00) Mar 920.00 (+10.00)

ROBUSTA COFFEE: Mar 2100.00 (+10.00) Mar 2100.00 (+10.00)

WHITE SUGAR: Mar 370.00 (+10.00) Mar 370.00 (+10.00)

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMISSION: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

WHEAT: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

BARLEY: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

RYE: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

MAIZE: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

SOYBEAN: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

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SOYBEAN: Mar 120.00 (+10.00) Mar 120.00 (+10.00)

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

No frying tonight

IT SEEMS the British are not ready for upmarket fish and chips. While Harry Ramsden's Yorkshire fishery goes from strength to strength, a restaurant selling a rather posher version of the national dish — complete with Japanese sauces and sundried tomatoes — has closed after six months.

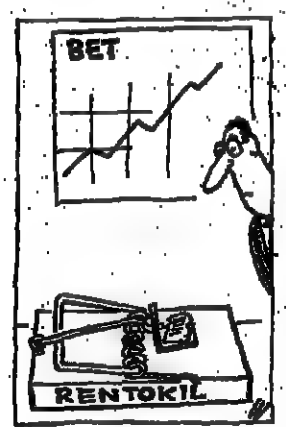
M. Fish was based within sight of Tower Bridge and just round the corner from the World Trade Centre. Alas, despite hiring the respected chef Anton Mosimann as a consultant, M. Fish suffered from cruel press reviews and poor evening trade. Those City types just don't seem to want fancy fast food...

A health matter

IF YOU bank at NatWest's Harley Street branch, I trust you are healthy and like a walk. After 74 years, NatWest is to close its branch at 154 Harley Street and transfer all business and client operations to 10 Marylebone High Street. NatWest says it's all to do with economies, and that the Marylebone branch is "no more than half a mile away".

Strike a light

GUESTS at Ronson's centenary party at Bibendum last night had their dreams come true. The James Dean lookalike, leather-clad hunk, astride a Harley Davidson, whose picture had adorned the invitations that chief executive Howard Hodgson sent out to his bash, was there... in the flesh. The hunk was none other than Howard Hodgson Junior, 22, Ronson's international gift salesman 1995, who had lit up the cigarette dangling from his lips with one of daddy's lighters for the invitation photograph.



RENTORIL

Farmyard facts

LIES, damned lies and porkies. January's inflation news may have been good, but the Central Statistical Office offered dark warnings yesterday that we are about to be caught in a vicious hog cycle. Bacon prices are rising sharply because the Japanese are buying Danish rashers. Animal husbandry may be unfamiliar ground to Jon McGinty, the CSO's retail prices expert, but he also solemnly explained that the hot summer weather had put sows off their boars, and there are very few piglets around this spring.

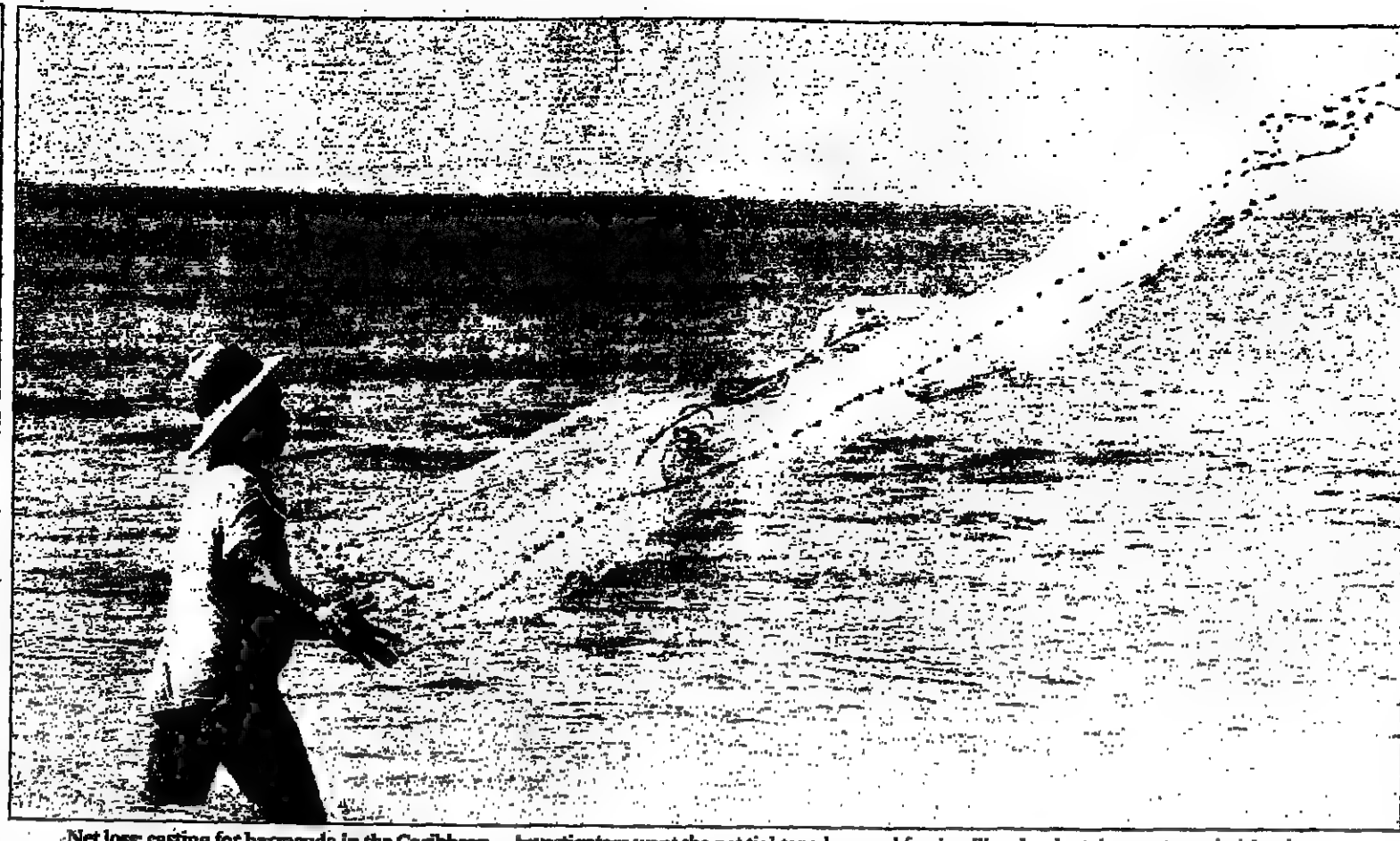
Shell in tune

THE fashion for New Age music with environmental themes has caught up with Shell, the oil company. As journalists entered Shell's press conference auditorium, yesterday, decked out in harsh 1980s red and yellow velour, they were greeted with the dreamy sound of Enya singing... *The Memory of Trees*.

Flying high

SBC WARBURG has appointed a replacement for Derek Higgs, the high-flying corporate financier who — after a brief holiday in Europe — jets off to join the Pru at the end of the month. Stephen Latner, a member of SBC Warburg's investment banking board, has been promoted to the post of UK country head.

COLIN CAMPBELL



Net loss: casting for barracuda in the Caribbean — investigators want the net tightened around foreign illegals who take sanctuary in island states

Lax laws of 'sunshine states' allow criminals a life of ease

Robert Miller reports on hindrances that blunt the fight against international crime

International fraudsters are enjoying the fruits of their crimes in some of the world's most pleasant sun-spots. They are doing so safe in the knowledge that, even though law-enforcement officers know who they are and what they have done, they are powerless to do anything about it.

This week, in an interview with *The Times*, senior officials from the Serious Fraud Office expressed their concern that efforts to prosecute criminals and choke off the proceeds of their ill-gotten gains are being hampered by many small island states, from the Caribbean to the Pacific.

The SFO and other international agencies such as the FBI, Interpol and the Financial Action Task Force, to which 26 Governments, including the United Kingdom, are signatories, believe that many island authorities are deliberately making it harder for investigators to gather evidence needed to secure a prosecution.

The example quoted most often is that of the Seychelles and its Economic Development Act (EDA), which has been dubbed a "money-launderers' charter". Investigators say that the Seychelles legislation, which has the personal backing and involvement of President Albert René, is hindering their efforts to cut off the flow of hundreds of billions of pounds from the proceeds of organised crime that circulates round the international money system every year.

Critics of the EDA claim that for a fee of \$10 million, criminals, including UK citizens, will be given diplomatic status in the Seychelles and a guarantee that their assets will be protected if any foreign authority tries to seize or even trace them.

One way of squeezing money-laundering out of the system is for banks and other financial institu-

tions in different countries to not only know their client but to know where the money comes from and how it was earned. In Britain, for example, any suspicious transactions must be reported to the authorities.

Law-enforcement officers believe that money being lodged in numerous small "friendly" island states around the world is not checked out, even though there is ample evidence to say that it is the proceeds of a criminal act, whether from drugs, bank robberies or other types of international fraud.

Chris Dickson and Patricia Howse, two of the SFO's most senior lawyers, believe that they are having to drop potential prosecutions because small island states are deliberately putting obstacles in their way. They say that in some cases a request for "mutual assistance" can take two years or more, and even then there is no guarantee that they will get beyond tracing the money to an "opaque" trust or bank account.

To gain access to vital evidence many Commonwealth countries require that criminal proceedings have been commenced before consideration can be given to providing evidence. But without such evidence it is often impossible to mount a prosecution.

Result? "The crooks go free," says Mr Dickson.

One of the reasons that criminals have had to move their money to more exotic locations is the success that a series of treaties and conventions have had in driving money-laundering out of Europe. Even Switzerland, for example, is far less secretive than it was although securing evidence can still be very time-consuming and more laborious than it needs to be.

One possible new weapon that could be added to the SFO's armoury is a "Hearsay Act", which is being considered by the Law Commission. This would allow statements taken from witnesses overseas to become admissible evidence in a UK court.

What has hampered progress in forging closer ties with Caribbean islands is antiquated legislation.

Also, it is not possible for Commonwealth "Dependent Territories" to sign new treaties on the grounds that the Queen is head of state in both cases, and she cannot make a co-operation treaty with herself. The same principle applies also in the Channel Islands.

Dianne Stafford, assistant director of the legal and constitutional affairs department of the Commonwealth Secretariat, believes that the next major issue to be addressed

by many members is how developed countries can help the smaller, less developed economies to provide better co-operation in fighting money-laundering.

She says: "It is important that there is a more concerted effort to beat the money-launderers. But in many cases we are talking about governments struggling with how to build a viable economy that will sustain development. If these countries do not have natural resources they are almost certain to turn to areas such as the financial services industry. Most island states around the world have also been the victims of fraud."

Ms Stafford also points out that in many cases there is neither the personnel nor sufficient resources to tackle sophisticated money-launderers. She believes that if the fight against the fraudsters is to be more effective on the international stage then the developed countries will have to help the island states develop more robust regulatory systems.

There is no doubt that fraud agencies have developed much closer ties with each other. On that level co-operation and the exchange of useful information between police officers, lawyers and forensic accountants about criminal activities is far better than was the case say ten, or even five, years ago. But there is still a long way to go at a government level in the different countries and further legislation is still needed to strengthen the hand of the fraudbusters.

While the fraudbusters are restricted in chasing criminals to other jurisdictions, the crooks simply pack their bags and jet off on the next plane to a suitably sunny and welcoming climate.

Without adequate powers, "it is a downward spiral of dirty money", Mr Dickson says.



Rene 'asset-protection'

Let private sector coal industry compete on even terms

From R.J. Budge

Sir, The Government's decision not to opt for a gas levy to bail out an ailing British Gas has to be good news for the coal mining industry. We have been arguing that such a levy would not have corrected the basic flaw in the gas market.

The gas industry has still to find a solution to the fundamental problem to meet gas contracted under long-term take-or-pay contracts. This contractual stranglehold restricts the option for competition in gas supplies and has knock-on implications for coal. Rather than a gas levy, or renegotiation of contract prices as suggested by others, we believe that the best solution would be scaling back of the take-or-pay obligations in these anti-competitive contracts. The problem is one of volume — not of price. Under our proposals, customers would be able to benefit from any cheap gas available since

they would have the headroom to buy it, and British Gas and others would not have to dump gas by selling at prices well below their purchase costs.

Scaling back of gas contract volumes would also encourage coal-on-gas competition in the electricity market. The "dash for gas" power stations that were ordered between 1990 and 1994 will produce electricity at a higher cost than existing coal-fired stations can achieve on competitive and sustainable UK coal. We estimate that the cost of producing electricity from these gas stations is 50 per cent higher than the electricity from existing coal-fired stations. However, the take or pay contracts force the gas stations to run in preference to their cheaper coal competitors.

In recent days we have seen that gas supplies to many of these stations have been interrupted by British Gas, just at

the time when the power was most needed. Coal plants are required to hold minimum fuel stocks; so why aren't gas stations? The value of flexible, reliable and economic coal plant that has helped keep the lights on should not be understated.

All we seek is that the private sector coal industry be given the opportunity to compete on a fair and level playing field so that Britain's 22 million electricity users can share in the benefits of a competitive and reliable source of energy that will be available for generations to come.

Yours faithfully,
R.J. BUDGE,
President,
The Confederation of United Kingdom Coal Producers,
Confederation House,
Thornes Office Park,
Denby Dale Road,
Wakefield,
West Yorkshire.

It's not a laugh

From Mr A.J. Dorman

Sir, Most of the pictures I have seen of Mr Gerry Robinson during the battle for Forte have shown him laughing heartily.

Surely the breaking up of a business carefully built up since 1935 is no laughing matter.

I hope that Sir Rocco and his colleagues will be able to buy back the hotels they want. The only trouble is, this will make the huge fees, payable by both sides to their advisers, look even more ridiculous.

I wonder what Ms Galley would have to say about that? Yours faithfully,
A.J. DORMAN,
38 Kew Green,
Richmond,
Surrey.

Letters to the Business and Finance section of *The Times* can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

Cold comfort

From J.P. Read

Sir, Following Mr Anatole Kaletsky's article "Seismic shift over growth", January 30, I wonder how many people will be comforted by the thought that the extent to which they have been financially ruined by holding cash and bonds over the long term is because having a weak currency is a positive virtue?

Similarly, how many who have had the advantage of their funds in a strong currency or bonds will consider that their continued financial strength is an economic evil that governments must do their utmost to fight?

It is as well to remember that the ability of a government to maintain the probability of its currency depends on its

ability to honour its word. This clearly requires an understanding of economic fundamentals and the willingness and ability to put those into practice in its government of the country.

Unless the laws of a country are soundly based, and its finances soundly managed its economy will inevitably be damaged, and land and/or labour not being properly employed, and the people suffering the consequences.

Yours faithfully,
J.P. READ,
5 Turner Drive, NW11.

A question of consolation over Lloyd's building

From Mr Huw Griffith

Sir, As a long-suffering — and now non-underwriting — member of Lloyd's of London, I have long consoled myself in the midst of my disasters with the thought that whatever my personal financial problems I at least retained the social cachet of being the owner of however infinitesimal a part of what is, without any possibility of a peradventure, the most hideous building in the history of the world.

What is left of consolation now? Yours faithfully,
HUW GRIFFITH,
Foy's,
Popham,
Winchester,
Hampshire.

MMC referral?

From R.J. Simpson

Sir, In view of the undue influence exerted by Mercury Asset Management (MAM) on

the Granada bid for Forte, and also on previous successful bids, should not the takeover be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC), or the OFT?

Yours faithfully,
R.J. SIMPSON,
Chaffield,
Park View Road,
Woldingham,
Surrey.

Gatecrashers ready to spoil MAI's party

Eric Reguly says the Hollick-Stevens marriage could end before a honeymoon

The proposed £3 billion merger between MAI and United News & Media is anything but certain. The deal, according to senior investment bankers, is just waiting to be spoiled.

Said one: "Everyone in the media world is looking at how to break this thing up. I give the merger no better than a 50-50 chance of going ahead." Even Granada, which just acquired Forte in a £3.8 billion hostile takeover, is wondering whether the opportunity is too good to pass up.

MAI and United unveiled their surprise marriage last week. Their idea is to create a media conglomerate, with interests ranging from the Anglia and Meridian ITV franchises held by MAI, to the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express* under United's umbrella.

The trigger was the Broadcasting Bill, now making its way through Parliament, which will relax many of the restrictions on cross-media ownership, allowing the formation of media

groups with enough bulk to compete with the likes of Walt Disney, which recently bought America's ABC-TV network, and Time Warner, which is negotiating to buy Ted Turner's US cable empire. But the merger was criticised as a defensive move.

On their own, MAI and United were thought to be sitting ducks. United was approached late last year by several investment groups keen to buy its struggling Express titles; MAI was simply considered undervalued.

A closer examination of the deal calls the whole "synergy" argument — promoted by Lords Hollick and Stevens, chiefs of MAI and United respectively, into question. While there may be some benefit in having ITV companies and newspapers under one roof, the gains from adding exhibitions and money-broking business to the mix are unclear. Yet newspapers and TV would account for only 44 per cent of the combined group's annual revenues of £1.9 billion.

The merger appears to have no immediate benefit to investors in either company. Since it is being com-

pleted though a share swap, shareholders receive no cash and are being offered no premium. Why, then, should they resist a counter-bid?

Who might ride to the rescue of these shareholders? Carlton Communications, led by Michael Green, remains the top candidate. He broke short a Caribbean holiday last week to consider launching a bid for either. Under Takeover Panel rules, Mr Green has 60 days from Tuesday this week, when MAI and United posted their merger document, to make up his mind.

The obstacles to buying MAI, however, are considerable. Carlton and MAI together would control slightly less than 15 per cent of the TV viewing audience — the limit to be imposed by the Broadcasting Bill — but would run into trouble with the Office of Fair Trading over their much higher percentage of ITV advertising. Carlton gave the OFT an undertaking in 1994 that it would control no more than

25 per cent of the advertising market. An identical undertaking was given by Granada. Carlton might be able to find a way to "ring fence" MAI's TV companies so it is deemed not to have control over their advertising income. Alternatively, it might be able to set up a separate company, one that would have to be more than half owned by a non-media company, to bid for MAI.

If those options failed to clear the regulatory minefield, Carlton could bid for United instead. Industry insiders think Mr Green would welcome the opportunity to reverse the declining fortunes of the Express papers.

The risks are high, but Carlton is under pressure to make a big move. Granada stole the limelight when it bought Forte in January; MAI did the same with its proposed merger with United and the subsequent announcement that it is to build a £225 million film-inspired theme park in west London in partnership with Warner Bros. The TV industry is consolidating quickly and Mr Green has to decide whether he can afford to sit on the sidelines.

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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6, 1996

1

Belief that exports were for civil purpose was a 'Nelsonian use of the blind eye'

The moral case must be set against damage to British economic interests

The following are extracts from the summary of Sir Richard Scott's report:

Over the period from the ceasefire in August 1988 to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 there was a relaxation in Government policy on the export of defence equipment and dual-use goods to Iraq. Policy on the export of lethal equipment remained unchanged. Applications for licences to export lethal equipment to Iraq were hardly ever made. When they were, they were refused. But the position regarding defence equipment not falling into the "lethal" category and regarding dual-use equipment was less clear cut.

As to both non-lethal defence equipment and dual-use goods, of which machine tools and their accessories constitute the most important example, restrictions on exports to Iraq (and Iran) were still maintained. But the restrictions applied to Iraq were not the same as those which had been announced in 1985 and had been in force up to the ceasefire.

Shortly after the ceasefire a policy under which more liberal restrictions would be applied was discussed and formulated and from February 1989 (on a trial basis) or April 1989 (on a confirmed basis), the new relaxed formulation was applied to exports to Iraq. The execution of Mr Bazon in March 1990 provoked a decision to return to a stricter policy towards Iraq. In June and July 1990 a review of export policy to Iraq and Iran took place and resulted in a decision, reached in mid July 1990, to abandon the special restrictions on exports to Iraq of non-lethal defence equipment and of dual-use goods.

Throughout the period August 1988 to August 1990 restrictions were applied to the export of chemicals and of equipment with potential for the manufacture of chemical weapons or for use in connection with the deployment of those weapons. In addition, restrictions necessary for compliance with obligations under

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the NNPT and MTCR were applied.

Over the period August 1988 to August 1990 there was, in relation to the export to Iraq of machine tools, a continuing tension between the FCO and the DTI. The DTI was consistently unsympathetic to restrictions on the export to Iraq of standard machine tools and their accessories. The basic reasons for the DTI attitude were twofold. First, the sale to Iraq of machine tools was of importance to the survival of the machine tool industry in the West Midlands. An inability to sell to Iraq would threaten the survival of leading machine tool manufacturers, of whom Matrix Churchill was one.

It was feared that the collapse of any of these companies would lead to a loss of jobs in an area where unemployment was already a serious concern. There was therefore, every reason for the DTI to be anxious to promote the well being of the machine tool manufacturers. Second, the DTI was not persuaded that any important practical benefit could be achieved by refusing the export from the United Kingdom of machine tools to Iraq.

The refusal would not deprive Iraq of the machine tools, Iraq would simply obtain the desired machine tools from manufacturers, trade rivals of the British companies, in other countries. The British exporters would suffer the detriment of loss of business, which would be taken up by foreign trade rivals, with no effect on Iraq save, perhaps, some marginal differences in price or quality. These were,

on my assessment, powerful arguments.

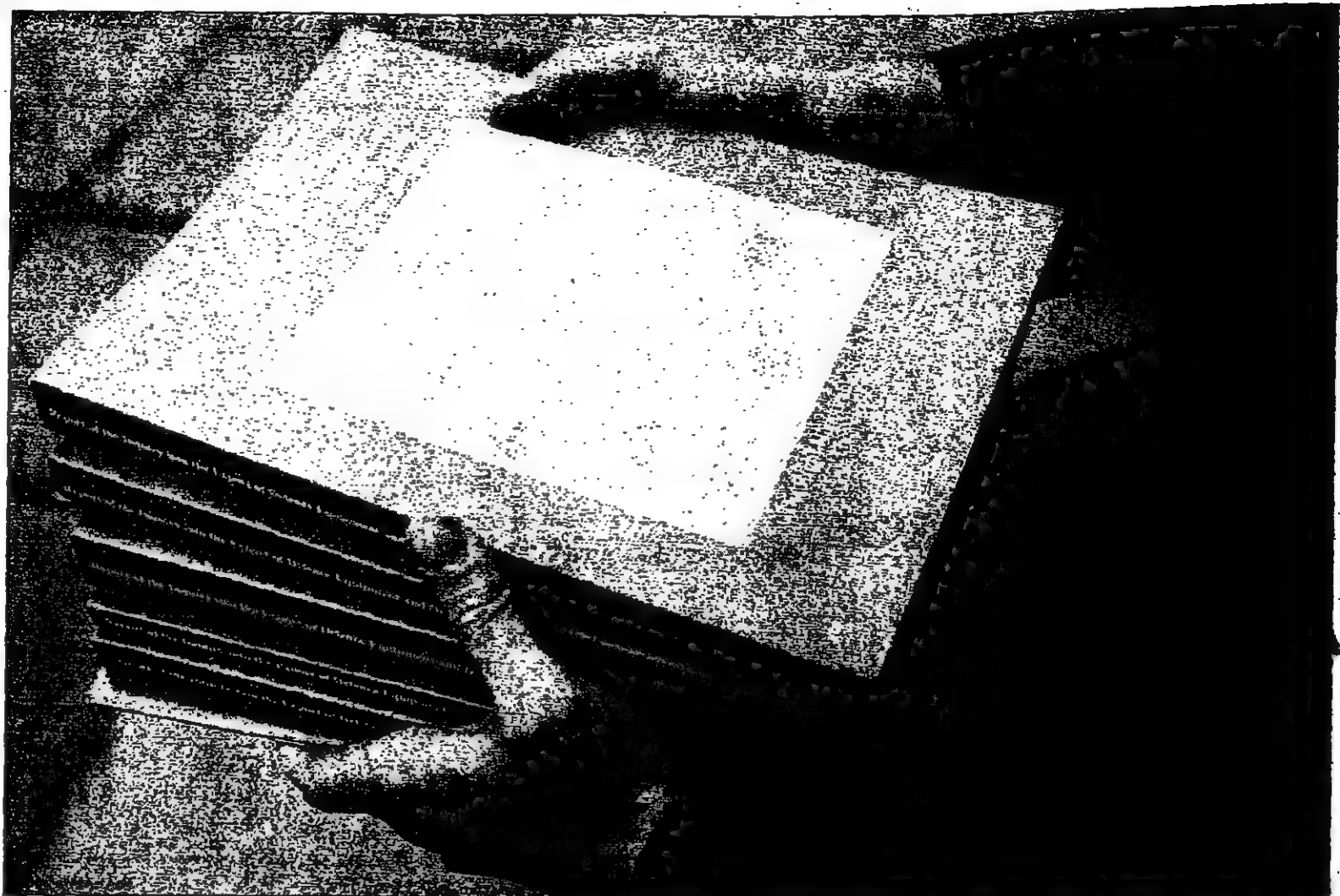
The FCO, on the other hand, was concerned with the political and presentational consequences of the sale to Iraq of the machine tools. The likelihood, if not the certainty, of many of the machine tools ending up in munitions or armaments factories was known. The political implications of Britain providing the means for Iraq to build up an indigenous armaments manufacturing facility were viewed with an understandable apprehension. The inclination within the FCO throughout the period was, therefore, to oppose the export of machine tools with a potential for the manufacture of armaments.

The MOD's *de facto* role in resolving differences between the DTI and the FCO was important. At the official level, the MODWG consistently recommended refusal of licences for machine tool exports to Hussein and Nassr. These recommendations, which accorded with the FCO's inclination, were generally accepted by the IDC. At the ministerial level, however, after Mr Clark succeeded Lord Trefgarne as Minister (DP), MOD support for the DTI resulted, in cases where the case for refusal was not clear cut, in the FCO's inclination for the refusal of licences being overridden.

The tension between FCO and the DTI was mirrored, within the MOD, by a not dissimilar tension between DESO, on the one hand, and the branches of the MOD with responsibility to provide ad-

End use was not explicit

vice on the military potential of exports including the DIS, on the other. DESO filled the role of "honest brokers" in trying to resolve these tensions, but seem when doing so generally to have tended to favour DESO, a tendency which became the stronger when Mr Clark became the Minister (DP). Throughout the period



The Scott report: hundreds of pages detailing the inquiry's findings on the Government's role and responsibilities in the arms-to-Iraq affair

under review, there were no applications for the export of machine tools to Iraq in which the purpose for which the machines would be used was explicitly stated to be the manufacture of armaments. If there had been any such application, it would have been refused. The DTI might have argued in favour of the export and MOD/DESO might have given support, but the arguments would not, in my view, have prevailed against FCO opposition until the review of policy in July 1990 had cleared the way.

If it had been known for certain by the three licensing departments that the intended use of the machine tools in Iraq was the manufacture of munitions, the position would, in my opinion, have been the same. The DTI would, I think, still have argued in favour of the export but the FCO would not have given way and, subject to a review of policy by senior ministers, would, I believe, have prevailed.

In the event, in none of the applications for export licences made by the machine tool manufacturers was it

stated that the intended use of the machines in question was the production of ammunition or armaments. In nearly all the applications the stated intended use was couched in imprecise terms, such as "general engineering". In a number of cases the DTI put questions to the manufacturers to clarify the specifications of the machines. In very few cases, however, did the DTI criticise or demand amplification of the imprecise statement of intended use contained in the application forms. When they did ask, they were very easily satisfied.

In a number of cases it was known to the would-be exporters that the intended use of the machines was the production of armaments or munitions. In these cases the imprecise statements in the application forms constituted a deliberate concealment of the known intended use. This deceptive practice was attributable in part to the belief by the manufacturers that they had been encouraged by Mr Alan Clark, in his remarks to them on 20 January 1988, to stress, when applying for licences,

the potential civil purposes to which the machines could be put. The deceptive practice was attributable also to a belief by the manufacturers that Government was aware that the likely use of the machines would be munitions

Intelligence overlooked

production and was complacent about that possibility.

Within the three licensing departments, the argument as to whether or not export licences for the machine tools should be granted was conducted on the basis that the use of the machines for armaments production was possible but not certain. The degree of believed likelihood varied from time to time. This basis of discussion was, having regard to the volume of intelligence regarding the likely or intended use of the machines, a false one.

In relation to some machines, the content of the available intelligence left no room for doubt about the

intended use of the machines. This was so of the machine tools to which the Intelligence Report of 30 November 1987 related, of the machine tools comprised in the Cardoen contracts, of the ABA machine tools (at least at the time when the revalidation application was being considered), and of the machine tools destined for Project 1728.

In the case of the machine tools to which the 30 November 1987 Report related, the exports were allowed to proceed for, mainly, source protection reasons, notwithstanding knowledge by the licensing departments of the intended use.

In relation to the other machine tools, the relevant intelligence, although available, was overlooked and not taken into account in the discussions. Some of the relevant items of intelligence had been distributed to the licensing departments but these items had either been forgotten about or their attention drawn to the items. Many items of intelligence had not been distributed to the licensing departments at all. Some items had been circulated within MOD/DIS but had not reached the DIS desk with responsibility for export licensing advice.

In addition to intelligence directed to specific machine tools or specific Iraqi projects, there was an ever increasing volume of intelligence from which the Iraqi concentration on building up an indigenous arms production industry was apparent. Individual items of intelligence taken in isolation might have been passed off as inconclusive.

The cumulative volume of intelligence could not be so passed off. By November 1989, at latest, the probability that machine tools destined for Nassr would be used for military production purposes had become so strong that a professional reliance on the possibility of use in civil production and on the lack of certainty of an intended military use had become, in my opinion, equivalent to the Nelsonian use of the blind eye. But this, of course, assumes that the user of the telescope had been made aware of the relevant intelligence. It is probably true that no one person was familiar with all the accumulated intelligence until, in June 1990, the JIC made the assessment that was required for the purposes of the Iraq Note.

The failure of the licensing departments to make effective use of available intelligence was compounded by the failure of certain SIS officers to draw attention to inaccurate statements about current intelligence contained in submissions made by FCO officials to FCO ministers.

The relative lack of interest within SIS in Iraqi procurement diverted to conventional weapons and munitions, as opposed to weapons of mass destruction, was itself a product of the priorities imposed on the SIS by the JIC. It was an attitude shared with many sections of government, for example, SEND in the FCO. Mr Alan Clark made no secret of the clear distinction he drew between conventional weapons and weapons of mass

destruction. Attempts to prevent Iraq from obtaining the former would, in the absence of an internationally agreed embargo, be bound to fail. A unilateral embargo would merely prejudice British exporters. Attempts to prevent Iraq from obtaining weapons of mass destruction, on the other hand, had, via the NNPT and the MTCR, significant international support and some prospect of practical success.

Accordingly, although it was clear government policy that exports to Iraq of any weapons, conventional or otherwise, would not be licensed, and although the logic of this policy might be thought to demand a refusal to license the export to Iraq of machines intended for the manufacture of weapons, conventional or otherwise, there was, in my opinion, a lack of conviction shared by many sections of government in the value of or need for this policy in so far as standard machine tools, and other goods freely obtainable from other western countries, were concerned. I believe it was this lack of conviction that led the DTI, supported by the MOD, to regard the probability of an intended military use as insufficient to justify the refusal of export licences for the machine tools.

I have already commented on the divergence between actual policy on exports to Iraq and government statements of policy made in the period August 1988 to August 1990. Government's actual policy was well capable of being supported in argument. The utility of unilateral export restrictions was, and is, open to serious question.

The moral case for refusing to allow weapons and defence-related goods to be freely exported to a country under a regime such as Iraq under Saddam Hussein is to be set against the ability of Iraq to obtain the goods from other countries and the damage to British economic interests likely to be caused by the

Iraqi atrocities against Kurds

unilateral restrictions. But the failure of government to be forthcoming in its public statements about its export policy to Iraq precluded a public debate on this important issue taking place on an informed basis. Parliament and the public were designedly led to believe that a stricter policy towards non-lethal defence exports and dual-use exports to Iraq was being applied than was in fact the case.

The following extracts are from the main body of the report:

Over the period February 1989 to July 1989, a number of letters, signed mainly by Mr Waldegrave but a few by Lord Howe, were sent to MPs whose constituents had asked questions about government policy on defence sales to Iraq. The questions had been prompted by a variety of concerns. The concerns covered specific military exports to Iraq, Iraqi atrocities against the Kurds, Iraqi

Continued on facing page

'I do not think there is anything sinister in this'



'I am justified in saying there was no change in policy and therefore no necessity to say anything in Parliament'

William Waldegrave
September 22 1993



'Slightly Alice in Wonderland: Mr Waldegrave saying because something was not announced it could not have happened'

Alan Clark
December 13 1993



'The extent to which a parliamentary answer should be full, half full or empty is up to the minister'

David Gore-Booth,
Ambassador to
Saudi Arabia,
September 13 1993



'In the Matrix Churchill case it would have been terrible if a defendant had gone to jail as a result of non-disclosure'

Michael Heseltine
February 28 1994



'I do not have to tell you that truth is a very difficult concept. Many-faceted.'

Ian McDonald,
MoD official,
October 26 1993



'It was a sham and a contributory reason as to why I left the Foreign Office'

Mark Hinson, FO,
on ministerial
answers in
the Commons,
July 15 1993



'I realised this was a can of worms'

Lt-Col Richard
Glazebrook, MoD.
Telling inquiry
Whitehall ignored
his warnings about
Iraq's military build-
up. May 11 1993



'There are circumstances in which... it is justified to give an answer that falls short of the whole truth'

Sir Robin Butler,
Cabinet Secretary,
Feb 9 1994



'Britain lives or dies by trade and has to maintain markets in some dodgy countries'

David Mellor, former
Foreign Office
Minister, September
21 1993



'The charge was that because I had been Chancellor, Foreign Secretary, Prime Minister, I must have known what was going on'

John Major
January 17 1994



'If I had seen a copy of every document made in my Government, I'd have been in a snow storm'

Baroness Thatcher
December 6 1993



'I do not think there is anything very sinister in all this'

Richard Lucas,
Foreign Office
Minister 1983-85
and Scott's first
witness, May 4 1993

The inquisitor and the 'hit-woman' who made ministers squirm in relentless quest for the truth

Determined Scott braved critics' wounding blows

By Nigel Williams
Whitehall Correspondent

THE JUDGE

SIR RICHARD SCOTT has been stung by criticism of his methods. He was accused of acting as "despotic, inquisitor, advocate and judge" by the former Foreign Secretary Lord Howe of Aberavon, who argued that the inquiry was a breach of natural justice because witnesses were not cross-examined.

After the collapse of the Matrix Churchill trial in November 1992, the Opposition suggested that the inquiry should be carried out under the Tribunals of Inquiry (Evidence) Act 1921. This would have allowed full representation by counsel for each witness.

The Government rejected this but otherwise gave Sir Richard free rein in determining the nature of the inquiry. He was to be allowed to invite such witnesses as he saw fit and to decide the extent to which he set in public. The procedures he adopted were, "to a considerable extent," for the judge to decide, Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney-General, told MPs at the time. Sir Richard

believes that representation by lawyers would have taken up too much time and made the inquiry more adversarial. His team points out that witnesses were advised by counsel and granted immunity from prosecution. Civil servants were promised they would face neither disciplinary action nor damage to their careers.

John Major publicly defended the judge's methods. After Lord Howe launched his first attack on Scott when giving evidence to the inquiry in January 1994, the Prime Minister told the Commons: "It was the Government who set up the inquiry and gave Lord Justice Scott the freedom to pursue it as he thinks fit. I have no adverse comments to make on the way he is doing it."

It is no surprise, then, that Sir Richard cannot wait to get back to "real life". When he accepted the appointment in November 1992, he thought that the job would probably last a year to 18 months.

Since October 1994, he has been juggling his administrative

duties as Vice-Chancellor at the High Court with finishing the report. What he really enjoys most, say his friends, is sitting on the bench. While he was working on the report he managed just three days in two banking cases.

That his report has taken so long is down to his own precision, his close attention to detail and his scrupulous belief in fairness. No doubt he could have produced a less comprehensive — and less fair — report before now. But he was determined to be thorough and avoid providing the inquiry's detractors with any ammunition.

His critics, whose motive has been to undermine the report even before it was completed, have dismissed him as a vain publicity seeker, a meddler who enjoys the limelight too much. There are some in Whitehall who, in the cosy atmosphere of their clubs, will even mutter the words "class traitor" and ask darkly: "Whatever happened to positive vetting?"

Those who know him well find the criticism difficult to

square with the easy-going man who loves horses, enjoys bridge and who turned up on the morning he was to question Baroness Thatcher in a cloth cap and riding a Raleigh Falcon bicycle. He looked as if he was off to the village fête rather than to take on the most powerful prime minister of modern times.

Sir Richard, 61, was born in India, where his father was an officer in the Gurkha Rifles, but he was moulded in South Africa and at Cambridge, where he was a rugby player. Despite such an Establishment background, however, there is something of the unconventional about him.

During the Government's litigation over the publication of *Spycatcher*, he made the landmark ruling that ministers could not gag Peter Wright, the book's author, a former MI5 officer.

In a phrase that should have alerted the Government to the kind of man it was putting in charge of the arms-to-Iraq inquiry, Sir Richard said that press freedom to report allegations of scandal in government was "one of the bedrocks of our democracy".



Sir Richard, riding to work on his Raleigh Falcon

Lawyer made her point with rapier

THE QC

PRESLEY BAKENDALE was swiftly dubbed "Scott's hit-woman" after clashes with ministers. Ms Bakendale, 44, is renowned for her giggle but is a tough, clinical, fearless interrogator — as witnesses from Prime Ministers to middle-ranking civil servants discovered.

The result of her exchanges with Baroness Thatcher were judged to be a score draw. At one point Lady Thatcher could not conceal her irritation at being asked the same question "again and again and again". But that is the Bakendale style: meticulous sifting of the evidence and returning to consider the point from every angle.

She tied William Waldegrave in knots, leading him to comment at one point: "There is a misunderstanding here, an understandable misunderstanding." He was afterwards reported to have found her style of questioning "offensive". Tim Renton, the former Foreign Office Minister, said that he felt "drained" by his inquisition.

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC, who has worked closely with Ms Bakendale, said: "She has a deceptive nice-



Presley Bakendale

ness. People are led down the garden path thinking how nice she is. Then suddenly they find a rapier stuck between their ribs."

The daughter of a sweet manufacturer, she studied law at Oxford and was called to the Bar in 1974 after a brief spell teaching. She made her name in a series of child abuse cases, including the public inquiry into the death of Jasmine Beckford. She and her husband Richard Fitzgerald, a tax barrister, have two children and homes in Regent's Park and Sussex.

Her unusual first name is understood to have come about after her parents saw the name on a cup bought by friends at an auction.

From facing page

human rights violations in general. British participation at the Baghdad International Military Fair (which was held from 29 April to 2 May), the British Aerospace proposal to sell Hawk Trainer Aircraft to Iraq as well as general apprehension about the sales of arms and defence equipment to the Middle East.

A form of response to be incorporated in the letters sent to the MPs in question, was set out in the FCO. The response included the following two sentences (for the gist of them):

"British arms supplies to Iran and Iraq continue to be governed by the strict application of guidelines which prevent the supply of lethal equipment or equipment which would significantly enhance the capability of either side to resume hostilities. These guidelines are applied on a case by case basis."

Letters to MPs incorporating these sentences and signed by Mr Waldegrave numbered some seven in March 1989, five in April, 23 in May, one in June and two in July. Lord Howe signed two similar letters in May and two in July. In one of the April letters and in each of the May, June and July letters the formula was preceded by the statement that: "The Government have not changed their policy on defence sales to Iraq or Iran."

In one letter there was a reference to "our firm and even-handed position over arms sales to Iran and Iraq."

The reference in each of these letters to the criterion that governed the supply of non-lethal defence equipment to Iraq was not accurate. Since the end of February 1989 the criterion for Iraq had been the new formulation, namely, that there would be no supply of equipment which would be of direct and significant assistance to Iraq in the conduct of offensive operations in breach of the ceasefire. The inaccurate

Every policy has a reason

cy should have been noticed by Mr Waldegrave, who had been one of the midwives at the birth of this new formulation. Lord Howe, on the other hand, had not been informed of the junior minister's agreement on the new formulation.

The statement in the letters that "The Government have not changed their policy on defence sales to Iraq or Iran" was untrue. After the ceasefire Lord Howe had advocated, and the Prime Minister, with the concurrence of senior ministers, had accepted, that a more liberal policy, designed to enable British exporters to take advantage of the glittering opportunities for defence-related sales to Iraq that it was believed would be available, should gradually be adopted.

The discussions between the junior ministers, which began with correspondence in November and December with the ministerial meeting on December 21, 1988, were for the purpose of trying to formulate a new policy which would then be brought to senior ministers and the Prime Minister for approval.

Agreement by the junior ministers had led, by February 1989, to a new, more liberal, policy in the form of revised guideline (iii) being

implemented on a trial basis. The proposed new policy, although reversed for Iran following the Rushdie affair, was confirmed at the April 24, 1989, ministerial meeting and in the correspondence that followed.

Mr Waldegrave knew, first hand, the facts that, in my opinion, rendered the "no change in policy" statement untrue. I accept that, when he signed these letters, he did not regard the agreement he had reached with his fellow ministers as having constituted a change in policy towards Iraq. In his evidence to the inquiry, he strenuously and consistently asserted his belief, in the face of a volume of, to my mind, overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that policy on defence sales to Iraq had, indeed, remained unchanged. I did not receive the impression of any impropriety on his part in giving me the evidence he did. But it is clear, in my opinion, that policy on defence

the Government was dated April 17. Mr Waldegrave has explained that [his] view (and the advice of his officials) was that the policy was "even-handed" as applied to the territorial and other ambitions of Iran and Iraq and that "particular steps taken in the area of exports in reaction to

Statement in letters untrue

unforeseen events such as the Fatwah and the execution of Mr Bazoft did not detract from the even-handedness or neutrality or impartiality applied to the two states." As to the first part of this explanation, the letter referred to the Government's "even-handed position over arms sales to Iran and Iraq" (emphasis added); as to the second, the explanation has, in my opinion, no substance. Every government policy is bound to have some reason behind it. The unre-

has pursued a policy of impartiality as the most effective way to promote a peaceful settlement in the Gulf. As a result, the Foreign Secretary announced in the House of Commons on October 29, 1985, a set of ministerial guidelines limiting defence sales to Iran and Iraq. These specifically prohibited the sale of any lethal equipment or any defence-related equipment — which could significantly enhance the capability of either side to prolong or exacerbate the conflict. All applications for export licences for defence equipment to Iran or Iraq continue to be scrutinised rigorously to ensure that they fall within these guidelines. These restrictions on defence sales are kept under constant review, and are applied in the light of prevailing circumstances, including the ceasefire and developments in the peace negotiations...

Mr Waldegrave, in his written evidence to the inquiry, contended that the passage I

How lucrative market backfired

COUNTDOWN TO INQUIRY



Iranian prisoners of war being held in Iraq; the conflict is estimated to have claimed one million lives

liberal interpretation" had been agreed.

January 1988: Tony Steadman, head of export licensing at the DTI, rings firms to tell them the Iraq export licences have been frozen.

Later: Alan Clark meets the manufacturers and tells them he is reversing Mr Steadman's decision. Present is Mark Gutteridge, sales director of Matrix Churchill and an M15 informer. Mr Clark encouraged the firms to

emphasise the machinery's "general engineering" uses and not to mention that they were intended for military applications.

February 1989: interpretation of export guidelines toughened again after the war against Salman Rushdie.

March 1990: the *Observer* journalist Farzad Bazoft executed in Iraq.

April 1990: Dr Gerald Bull, designer of Iraqi "superguns", killed outside his flat in Brussels.

large steel pipes destined for the supergun.

July 31, 1990: Paul Henderson of Matrix Churchill told by DTI that last batch of machine tools cleared for export.

August 2, 1990: Iraq invades Kuwait.

December 1990: Mr Clark summons to see John Major and Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary. He admits that he had advised Matrix Churchill to alter specifications "so they would not be seen as suitable for military purposes".

October 1990: Customs and Excise decides to prosecute Matrix Churchill.

Gerald Hosker, the Treasury Solicitor, draws up plan to use public interest immunity certificates to stop top-secret government documents, including M15 and M16 papers, being released in court.

November 1992: Matrix Churchill trial opens at the Old Bailey. Geoffrey Robertson, QC, persuades Judge Smedley to ignore the PII certificates and the case collapses.

November 1992: Sir Richard Scott appointed to conduct independent inquiry.

the then current policy on defence sales to Iraq and cannot be blamed for the inaccuracies. I have already dealt with the extent to which Mrs Thatcher was in a position to have identified the inaccuracies. She had received and read the MoD paper dated July 20, 1989, on the Hawk project in which reference was made to the "more flexible interpretation of the guidelines for Iraq (but not Iran...)" and so can be said to have been placed on notice that a more liberal approach to defence sales to Iraq was being adopted than had previously been the case. But the paper had been concentrating on Hawk and I do not think Mrs Thatcher can be blamed if, when signing the letter of August 21, 1989, she did not recall the implications of the reference to the guidelines in the MoD's July 20 Hawk paper.

Mr Major had become Foreign Secretary on July 25, 1989, and it might have been expected that, by September, he would have become aware that government policy on the export licensing of non-lethal defence equipment to Iraq was that a more liberal criterion should be applied to Iraq than to Iran, and that the more liberal criterion for Iraq was significantly different from the original 1985 (or 1984) criterion. In his evidence to the inquiry, Mr Major said that he believed throughout that the original guidelines had remained in use and that he had been "advised by those carrying out the policy at operational level that we were impartial" as to the nature of the "impartial" policy. Mr Major said: "I think the Government's approach was impartial in the sense of not aiding either side in the prosecution of the war, or subsequently no doubt in the minds of officials after the war was ended, in enhancement of military capability." However, on July 25, 1989 he received his first brief as Foreign Secretary. The brief had been prepared by Stephen Lamport for the purposes of an OD committee meeting to discuss the Hawk project. Paragraph 3 of the brief said that "since the ceasefire in August 1988, the guidelines have been applied with greater flexibility for Iraq (but since last February, with much greater rigidity for Iran...)." Our public presentation of our policy on arms supplies to both countries has, however, stayed broadly the same... "This briefing did, it

seems to me, put Mr Major on notice that Iraq was receiving more favourable treatment than Iran so far as export licensing of defence equipment was concerned, a state of affairs that, in my opinion, calls into question a continuing stance of impartiality.

In any event, the briefing was directed to the Hawk project and, as with Mrs Thatcher, I do not find it very surprising that Mr Major did not advert to all the implications of the briefing on other issues. I do not doubt Mr Major's evidence that he signed the letters believing the statements they contained to be accurate, but I do not accept that they were in fact accurate.

In August 1989 Mr Alan Clark, who had exchanged ministerial offices with Lord Trefgarne, wrote two letters, one to Mr Richard Needham MP, the other to Sir Michael Shaw MP, containing the same paragraphs (subject to immaterial changes) as those in Lord Trefgarne's letters.

Two further letters from Mr Clark, both dated 11 September 1989, also contained these paragraphs.

The September letters had been written in response to letters from constituents to their MPs expressing strong opposition to the proposal that the Government approve the sale to Iraq of Hawk aircraft. The letters had been forwarded by the MPs, Mr Dawn Primarolo and Mr Timothy Raison, to the MOD. The same criticisms apply to Mr Clark's letters as I have

made in respect of Lord Trefgarne's letters, *mutatis mutandis*.

The answers to PQs in both Houses of Parliament, failed to inform Parliament of the current state of government policy on non-lethal arms sales to Iraq. This failure was deliberate and was an inevitable result of the agreement between the three junior ministers that no publicity would be given to the decision to adopt a more liberal, or relaxed, policy, or interpretation of the guidelines, originally towards both Iran and Iraq and, later, towards Iraq alone.

Having heard various explanations as to why it was necessary or desirable to withhold knowledge from Parliament and the public of the Government's approach to the licensing of non-lethal defence sales to Iran and Iraq respectively, I have come to the conclusion that the overriding and determinative reason was a fear of strong public opposition to the loosening of the restrictions on the supply of defence equipment to Iraq and a consequential fear that the pressure of the opposition might be detrimental to British trading interests.

The problem with the "half a picture" approach is that those to whom the incomplete statement is addressed do not know unless it is apparent from the terms of the state-

ment itself, that an undisclosed half is being withheld from them. They are almost bound, therefore, to be misled by the statement, notwithstanding that the "half a picture" may, so far as it goes, be accurate. The proposition is not that a statement to Parliament must include each and every fact relating to the subject in order to avoid

Almost bound to be misled

Continued on next page



The "Shell" Transport and Trading Company, Public Limited Company

Final dividend 1995

Notice is hereby given that a balance of the Register will be struck on 11th April, 1996 for the preparation of warrants for a Final dividend for the year 1995 of 20.4p per 25p Ordinary Share. If approved at the Annual General Meeting to be held on 15th May, 1996 the dividend will be paid on 22nd May, 1996.

For transferees to receive this dividend, their transfers must be lodged with the Company's Registrar, Lloyds Bank Registrars, The Gauseway, Worthing, West Sussex BN99 6DA, not later than 3pm on 11th April, 1996.

SHARE WARRANTS TO BEARER

The Coupon to be presented for the above dividend will be No. 195 which must be deposited at Lloyds Bank, Registrars' Department, Issues Section, Ground Floor, P.O. Box 1000, Antinoli House, 71 Queen Street, London EC4N 1SL (not later than 11th April, 1996, to receive payment on 22nd May 1996) or may be surrendered through Messieurs Lazard Frères et Cie, 121 boulevard Haussmann, 75382, Paris Cedex 08.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Miss J. E. Munsiff
Secretary

Shell Centre,
London SE1 7NA
15th February, 1996

The natural implication

new formulation but regarded it as an interpretation or the original guideline (iii). Nonetheless, a statement in August 1989 that applications for export licences for defence equipment for Iraq "continue to be rigorously scrutinised to ensure that they fall within these guidelines" (emphasis added),

prompted the letter to Mr Sackville had complained about defence sales to Iraq, and the reference to the policy of impartiality would have been naturally read accordingly. Taken overall, the terms of Mr Waldegrave's letter to Mr Sackville and his other letters in like terms were, in my opinion, apt to mislead the readers as to the nature of the policy on export sales to Iraq that was currently being pursued by the Government. Mr Waldegrave was in a position to know that that was so although I accept that he did not intend his letters to be misleading and did not so regard them. The statement that "...the Government have pursued a policy of impartiality..." between Iraq and Iran is to be found, also, in letters dated August 14, 1989, August 21, 1989, September 4, 1989, and September 5, 1989, the first from Lynda Chalker, the second from Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister, and the

Judge condemns ministers' secrecy for reasons of convenience or to avoid embarrassment

From page 31

being misleading. Such a requirement would clearly be impracticable. A fair summary of the "full picture" would often, depending on the question that had been asked and the apparent purpose of the statement, be a complete and sufficient response. The proposition is that if part of the picture is being suppressed and the audience does not know it is being suppressed, the audience will be misled into believing the half picture to be the full picture.

Lord Howe's unapologetic acceptance of and support for the divergence between Government's statements of policy and Government's actual policy revealed by the public statements to which I have earlier referred was, in my opinion, more realistic than Sir Robin Butler's and Mr Gore-Booth's attempts to reconcile the giving of answers that designedly disclosed only part of the picture with the obligation to avoid giving misleading answers.

It is, rightly, accepted that there have always been and will always be subjects in respect of which full information, or sometimes any information, cannot be made public. Current operations of the security and intelligence agencies come easily to mind as examples. Sir Robin Butler, in evidence to the Inquiry and, also, to the Treasury and the Civil Service Select Committee, instanced information about imminent changes in interest rates or in exchange rates.

The public interest may require information about proposed changes to be withheld from the public. The examples are cogent. It ought, nonetheless, to be recognised that the obligation of ministers to give information about the activities of their departments and to give information and explanations for the actions and omissions of their civil servants lies at the heart of ministerial accountability and that every decision by a minister to withhold information from Parliament and from the public constitutes an avoidance, and sometimes an evasion, *pro tanto*, of ministerial accountability.

The importance, if ministerial accountability is to be effective, of the provision of full and adequate information is, in my opinion, self-evident. If, and to the extent that, the account given by a minister to Parliament, whether in answering parliamentary questions or in a debate, or to a select committee, withholds information on the matter under review, it is not a full account, and the obligation to account for what has happened, or for what is being

understood by the parliamentary players.

The answers are also an important medium by which information about government and its activities are made available to the public. It is to be noticed that the respects in which the answers to the parliamentary questions about government policy on defence exports to Iraq were inadequate and misleading were also respects in which some of the letters written in response to correspondence from members of the public were inadequate and misleading.

The context described by Sir Michael's paper for the answers to PQs would have no application to those letters. The context does not, in my opinion, excuse the inade-

Were rules changed?

quate or misleading character either of the answers to PQs or, *a fortiori*, of the letters to MPs to which I have referred. In the circumstances, the government statements made in 1989 and 1990 about policy on defence exports to Iraq consistently failed, in my opinion, to comply with the standard set by paragraph 27 of the Questions and Answers Procedure for Ministers and, more important, failed to discharge the obligations imposed by the constitutional principle of Ministerial accountability.

I have referred earlier in this section of the report to arguments that have been put forward in support of the proposition that the guidelines, as announced in 1985, remained in force and unchanged notwithstanding the agreement reached by the junior ministers over the period December 1988 to May 1989. For a number of reasons I do not accept that propositions or the arguments.

First, it is argued that the relaxation of the guidelines agreed upon by the junior ministers did not constitute a change in the guidelines but was no more than a liberal, relaxed interpretation, or implementation, of them. This argument, I must make clear, is not one that was produced by its proponents for the purposes of meeting questions put by the inquiry. It was a viewpoint widely expressed at the time. A clear exposition is contained in Mr Waldegrave's letter to Mr Clark of March 28, 1989, namely: "As a result of the ceasefire we agreed in February to interpret the export guidelines more flexibly so as to refuse orders for non-lethal equipment only if it would be of direct and significant assistance to either side in the conduct of offensive operations in breach of the ceasefire."

This "interpretation" is said to be consistent with the flexibility inherent in the guidelines from their inception. It was this "interpretation" that had been applied to Iraq since February 1989 and was confirmed for Iraq at the end of April 1989. In Mr Waldegrave's written comments, the use of revised guideline (iii) is described as follows: "The revised form of guideline (iii) was used by the MODWG and IDC in January and February 1989 as a temporary working premise on a trial basis. After the ceasefire, ministers decided that the suggested change in the guidelines should not go ahead and that instead the original guidelines were to be applied with flexibility. Thereafter, the MODWG and IDC applied the original guidelines restrictively for Iran and liberally for Iraq. In the case of Iraq, this meant in practice that those groups used the suggested revised form of guideline (iii) as an interpretative gloss on the original guidelines."

Misleading answers

done, has, *prima facie*, not been discharged. Without the provision of full information it is not possible for Parliament, or for that matter the public, to hold the executive fully to account.

It follows, in my opinion, that the withholding of information by an accountable minister should never be based on reasons of convenience or for avoidance of political embarrassment and should always require special and strong justification.

I well understand the point being made by Sir Michael Quinlan and it may be right that the answers to parliamentary questions of which I have been critical must be judged in the context of the parliamentary game described in the paper. But the giving of answers to parliamentary questions is not simply a part of the game described by Sir Michael, played for the benefit of and under unexpressed rules



Mr Henderson outside the Old Bailey after the collapse of his trial. He was out of work for two years but up to 100 former Matrix Churchill staff have not had a job since

The workers who continue to pay the price



Empty shell: the Matrix Churchill factory this week

BY NIGEL WILLIAMSON
WHITEHALL CORRESPONDENT

THE Matrix Churchill factory in Coventry stands derelict today. The For Sale signs hang forlornly but no one is interested in buying the silent plant with broken windows and boarded doors.

More than 650 skilled workers once worked there. They are the real victims of the arms-to-Iraq affair, according to Paul Henderson, the firm's former managing director.

Mr Henderson would be the first to admit that he is no angel. The business he was in was a dirty one and he acted as an informant for MI6 on the state of the Iraqi arms industry, telling the security services some of what he was up to. He still

MATRIX CHURCHILL

has no qualms about supplying a tyrant such as Saddam Hussein. But he says that what should not be forgotten, amid speculation over the future of here-today-and-gone-tomorrow politicians, is that Britain has lost its "fastest-growing machine tool company" with an annual turnover of £54 million.

In February 1991, Mr Henderson and his two fellow directors were arrested. He had been warned by MI6 to expect a routine visit from Customs and Excise. In the end, 16 officers arrived and arrested him for lying on export licence applications. The charge carried a maximum

seven-year jail sentence. MI6, he says, washed their hands of him and he spent a night in Wormwood Scrubs.

Eighteen months later he was tried at the Old Bailey for illegally exporting arms-making machinery to Iraq. He says that he is not bitter but he does feel that the security services and Government left him to hang in the wind.

"I have been waiting for this day because I just want the Scott report over and done with," he said. "It has been five and a half years. It has all dragged on far too long."

Up to 100 of his former workforce have never worked again. Others have been reduced to scratching a living by taxi-driving or repairing

cars outside their homes. "The guys on the shop floor were the ones who lost out. I hope people won't forget that. Any government minister who goes as a result of Scott won't find it very hard to get another job."

For more than two years during and after the trial he was unemployed. He is now the chief executive of Productions Systems International, a West Midlands company making welding machinery for the car industry.

"Justice was done as far as I was concerned when the case at the Old Bailey collapsed. The report reinforces the message. We lost a good company and a lot of skilled people for nothing. Just as long as people don't forget that."

The viewpoint expressed in the passage from Mr Waldegrave's letter that I have cited, and exemplified in the passage cited from his written comments, does not seem to me to correspond with reality. The revised formulation of guideline (iii) was intended to do two things: first, it was intended, in view of the termination of the conflict, to re-state guideline (iii) in a manner that could make sense; second, it was intended to release from the guidelines non-lethal equipment whose military value was primarily defensive. If that second purpose had not been present, the reference to "offensive operations in breach of the ceasefire" would not have been included and the limiting adjective "direct" would not have been necessary. To describe this revised formulation as no more than an interpretation of the old is, in my opinion, notwithstanding the many advocates who espoused the thesis, so plainly inapposite as to be incapable of being sustained by serious argument. In my opinion, the agreement to which Mr Waldegrave referred in his March 28, 1989, letter was, on an ordinary use of language, an agreement to adopt a new

and more liberal policy towards sales of applying a revised formulation of guideline (iii) in place of the original. The intended effect of the revised guideline was to release a certain class of non-lethal defence equipment from the guidelines. I accept that Mr Waldegrave and the other adherents of the "interpretation" thesis did not, in putting forward the thesis, have any duplicitous intention and, at the time, regarded the relaxed interpretation, or implementation, of guideline (iii) as being a justifiable use of the flexibility believed to be inherent in the guidelines. But that under-

'Duplicious flexibility'

lines, to my mind, the duplicitous nature of the flexibility claimed for the guidelines. Flexibility that reflects the differences of opinion that may arise whenever an attempt is made to apply a criterion that depends upon a value judgment is inevitable and desirable. For example, whether an enhancement of military capability is "signifi-

cant" is a matter on which opinions may differ. If opinions do differ, a decision falling within the spectrum created by those differences can legitimately be described as an application of the criterion. Guideline (iii) had, thus, an inherent and entirely acceptable flexibility. But the removal from the scope of guideline (iii) of non-lethal defence equipment of a primarily defensive nature is not a "flexible interpretation" of the guidelines. It is a decision that the guidelines will not be applied so as to restrict the sale of a certain class of defence equipment. The description of that decision as being merely a flexible interpretation, or flexible implementation, of the guidelines is misleading to anyone who does not know the substance of the decision.

It was argued, also, that because the revised formulation of guideline (iii) had never been approved by senior ministers or the Prime Minister, it could not have become government policy and could have been no more than an interpretation, relaxed and flexible, of the original guideline (iii). This argument, in my opinion, fails to distinguish

between form and substance. I accept that the three junior ministers who, over the period December 1988 to May 1989, agreed on the new line to be adopted towards defence-related exports to Iraq and Iran, knew that any formal alteration in the guidelines announced in 1985 would require the approval of senior ministers and the Prime Minister. The conduct of the debate from September 1988 to February 1989 had been on that footing. I accept also that in deciding that the agreed approaches to defence exports to Iraq and Iran respectively could be described as being interpretations of the 1985 guidelines, the junior ministers believed that they were avoiding a formal change of the 1985 guidelines.

But, however, the agreement reached by the junior ministers be described, if the substance of the agreement was to change the criterion that would be applied to applications for licences to export defence equipment to Iraq, they were, in any ordinary use of language, agreeing on a change of policy. I regard the explanation that this could not be so because the approval of the senior

ministers and the Prime Minister had not been obtained as sophistry.

Questions of Procedure for Ministers identifies as one of the facets of ministerial accountability the duty to give Parliament, and the public, "full information" as possible.

Ministerial accountability

about the policies, decisions and actions of the Government, and not to deceive or mislead Parliament and the public. Example after example has come to light of an apparent failure by Ministers to discharge that obligation.

The Howe guidelines (drawn up by Geoffrey Howe) were agreed in December 1984 but when in April and May 1985 parliamentary questions on defence sales to Iran and Iraq came to be answered, the existence of the guidelines was deliberately not disclosed.

From 1983 until the ceasefire in August 1988, arrangements were in place for defence sales to Iraq to be facilitated by the provision of medium-term ECGD credit cover. This de-

fence allocation represented an agreed proportion of the credit facilities for Iraq which had been agreed between the United Kingdom and Iraq. Yet when in 1990 parliamentary questions sought details of the protocols, no mention was made of the defence allocation.

A written answer given to a parliamentary question in January 1990 seeking the "total capital project cost cover offered under the export credit guarantee system" to a number of specified countries refused to supply the information. The ground given for the refusal was "commercial confidentiality".

Government statements in 1989 and 1990 consistently failed to disclose either the terms of the adjustment to the guidelines that had followed the ceasefire or the decision to adopt a more liberal policy on defence sales to Iraq.

The answer given in February 1991 to Mr Tony Banks's question asking whether any MoD officials attended the Baghdad Military Exhibition of April/May 1989 represented a deliberate concealment from Parliament of the circumstances under which Mr David Hastie had attended the exhibition.

The long and winding road that led to 1,800 pages

□ When was the inquiry set up? Almost 40 long months ago, in November 1992.

□ What was its remit? To examine whether ministers and officials operated within guidelines on arms exports to Iraq.

□ Who is Scott? He was appointed a Chancery judge in 1983. Last year the Government promoted him to Vice Chancellor of the Supreme Court, one of the most senior judicial appointments.

□ Why was he chosen? He himself has sometimes wondered. Lord Mackay of Clashfern recommended him to John Major.

□ Where has he been based for the past three years? In an anonymous DTI office in Palace Street, between Victoria and Buckingham Palace. The building was a former hotel and at times,

THE INQUIRY

putting in 12-hour days. Sir Richard must have wished it still was.

□ What does he do in the real world? Rides to hounds and rides a bicycle which became much loved by Fleet Street picture editors. For the record, it's a Raleigh Falcon with 18 gears.

□ What's his form? Mixed. Gave the Government a bloody nose in 1987 over Spycatcher, ruling that ministers could not gag Peter Wright, the former MI5 officer. But did the Government a favour during the miners' strike in 1984-85, when he granted an injunction limiting pickets at each pit to six.

□ Friends and enemies? A private, family man who sees no reason to belong to a London club.

He has, however, assembled an impressive list of powerful enemies during the course of his inquiry, including Lord Howe. But, as he said, "they weren't on my Christmas card list anyway."

□ Any regrets? He has a few. He never dreamt that the inquiry would take as long as it has and cannot wait to get back to "real life" — a strange description, some might say, for the High Court.

□ What help did he have? About 17 civil servants laboured with him from November 1992, including Presley Baxendale, QC, and Christopher Mumukshu, secretary to the inquiry.

□ What help did Whitehall have? About 17 civil servants working in "Scott units" in five different Government departments, "co-ordinating" the official response.

□ What kind of bill did he run up? £1.8 million.

□ And Whitehall? £1.9 million. Oh, and a further £925,000 spent on legal advice to ministers and civil servants.

□ A grand total of? £3.6 million

□ Why did it take Scott so long? See next five questions.

□ How many official documents were examined? 200,000. "A guestimate to the nearest 10,000. We haven't actually had time to count them all." However, Scott did read every single one, John Major regretted — sorry, commended — his "thoroughness".

□ How many witnesses submitted written evidence? 270, and many of the submissions ran to dozens of pages. Again, Scott ploughed through every page.

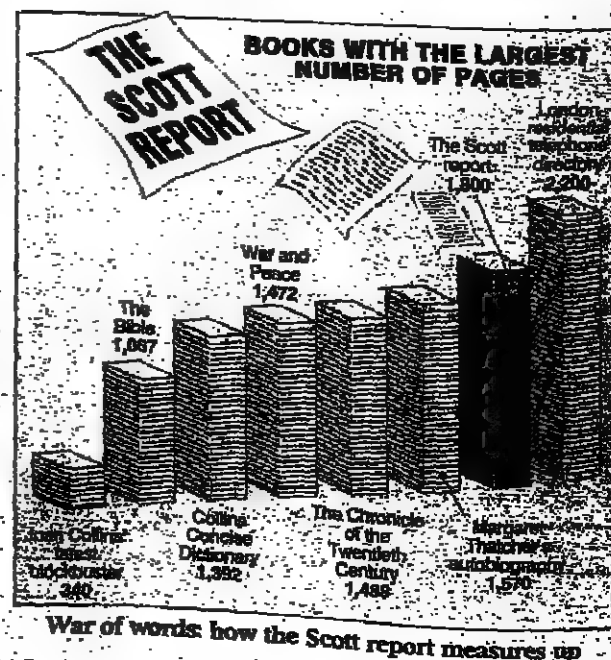
□ How many days of public hearings? 87, covering over 400 hours of evidence, between May 1993 and July 1994.

□ How many public witnesses were called? 61, including 19 ministers or former ministers.

□ How many witnesses were heard in closed sessions? 12, mostly MI5 and MI6 agents, who gave more than 50 hours of secret evidence.

□ Have there been any leaks? Astonishingly few. Sections of the draft concerning William Waldegrave's role were leaked to the BBC in June last year. Otherwise, security has been almost watertight.

□ What does it all boil down to? 1,800 pages in five volumes. Yours for £45.



THEATRE 1

Craig Raine's powerful updating of Racine, 1953, is given a fine new staging at the Almeida

THEATRE 2

Superb scenery but an indifferent cast for a Leeds revival of Gogol's *Government Inspector*

THE TIMES ARTS

MUSIC 1

Passion flows on Valentine's Day, as Roger Norrington leads Berlioz's *Romeo et Juliette*

MUSIC 2

Shortcomings of diction and expression mar Amanda Roccroft's night at the Wigmore Hall

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale hails Raine's updating of Racine. Plus, Gogol for the eyes only, and a flop for tots

Poet's pen as mighty as the sword

Something giddy and Gallic is in the cold London air. Months go by without a sniff of a 17th-century French classic, and then two turn up on consecutive days, each transposed to the most unlikely of times and climes. First, there was a 1990s *Misanthrope* at the Young Vic, complete with a Hollywood love-goddess and her coke-snorting retinue. Now we have Craig Raine's Nazification of Racine's *Andromaque*, starring a nobleman called Klaus-Maria von Orestes. What next, a *Cid* in which General Patton routs the Huns in the morning and marries Marilyn Monroe in the afternoon, as Cornielle's busy Rodrigue effectively does?

1953
Almeida

Actually, Raine's 1953 is a lot more imaginatively arresting than that. The year of the title is not the one in which Elizabeth was crowned and I first saw *The Mousetrap*. There is no Queen, no play by Agatha Christie, not even any London. Churchill apparently died after a night spent quaffing champagne with Brendan Bracken, leaving our capital to the mercy of Mussolini's son, Vittorio, who razed it with bombs and finished the job with anthrax. He rules in Rome, as Hitler does in Berlin, though there is unfinished business on the Russian front. You will not be surprised to learn that Raine advises us in a programme note to forget *Andromaque* and concentrate on his own dramatic poetry. Yet 1953 sticks almost as closely to Racine's plot as Martin Crimp's *Misanthrope* does to Molière. In the original, Orestes loves Hermione, who loves the butcher of Troy, Pyrrhus; and Pyrrhus loves Hector's widow Andromaque enough to refuse his fellow-Greeks demand that he kill



Jason Isaacs as the son of Mussolini and Pooky Quesnel as the mother of the heir to the British throne in Craig Raine's clever and original 1953

her son, Asyranax. Their counterparts here are Count Orestes, a German prince called Ira, Vittorio Mussolini, and the Anglo-Jewess Annette LeSque (Pooky Quesnel), whose son Angus is heir to the British throne. And all follow the paths and meet the ends of their prototypes. It is fascinatingly fanciful stuff, yet I can see why Raine made the leap. As he also says in the programme that he wanted "to use my contemporary register" rather than to do a nice, safe translation of Racine. But that obviously demanded a world dominated by big, brutal figures as ready to sacrifice people's lives to their passions as Pyrrhus or Hector. Are these to be found in Major's England, Churchill's France or post-Papandreou Greece? Hardly. Saddam Hussein's Iraq? Too alien a proposition. But those post-Christian paradises, the 1,000-year Reich and Fascist Italy... well, maybe.

Even if you cannot buy that, you will be gripped by the strong, bold feelings on display in an anteroom that, given Vicki Mortimer's mix of compositeness and art-deco modishness, suggests the Savoy as it might have been redesigned by Albert Speer. Jason Isaacs's bullet-headed Vittorio — that "shaved baboon" — exudes cut command as he lingers over the billiard table or violently spars with a long-suffering confidant. Adam Kotz's Orestes somehow maintains decency and dignity in situations friendly to neither. Emma Fielding makes a chillingly arrogant, contemptuous Ira. Yet all get, and grab, the opportunity to display the vulnerability you find not only in Racine but in Racine's

Thrilling sets for flat scenes

The *Government Inspector*
West Yorkshire Playhouse,
Leeds

The news is, of course, that an unidentified government inspector with the clout of grand St Petersburg is about to hit town. He seems bound to rumble these corrupt municipal rulers. A full-blown comedy of mistaken identities follows. The penniless but not stupid travelling clerk, Ivan Khlestakov (tiny, porky Toby Jones), finds himself winned and dined and getting his pockets lined. Fleeting the locals and playing off the ladies, he is what they deserve but also a rotter himself. This production proves good and bad. Visually it is stunning. McDermott's scene changes are *coups de théâtre*, choreographed swifly with cranked wit. Ivan's manservant, almost hallucinating from starvation in a poky inn, makes his entrance in bed. The latter wheels around by itself, alarmingly pursued by the staircase. When Ivan eventually waves

goodbye, we see him trundling off on a trolka constructed from the Governor's best chairs. Ivan, preposterously shooting the mouse head off the wall and getting his host's last carpet slung into the bargain, rides away with a fantastic variation on a pantomime horse. Unfortunately, the set is superior to the cast. Most crucially, Jones lacks the theatrical stature to shoulder the lead. He is short on sexual thrust, for one thing. Elsewhere, superb touches include Julian Bleach's cadaverous Charity Commissioner, bowing and bending like a weasel in a tailcoat. However, scenes go flat. While the farce might escalate further, the hard realities of hunger and abuse could be played more seriously. The seeds are there. The natty portraits of VIPs, peering down from hatches, suggest a world of insanity and surveillance. Generally, the text still needs sharper scrutiny, but Adrian Mitchell's verbally lively adaptation is a delight, and the satire of hopeless schools and crumbling hospitals sounds alarmingly close to home.

KATE BASSETT

Shrunk, but not rapt

Down Among the
Mini-Beasts
Polka, SW19

OUR children's theatres are commissioning work from writers with grown-up reputations. Kate Bassett writes. The Little Angel Theatre in North London boasts Ken Campbell and Gregory Motton, and Polka is currently employing Bryony Lavery, increasingly known for her adult writing. Aiming high is absolutely right. Unfortunately, *Down Among the Mini-Beasts*, intended for fives and over, is no great shakes.

This is the story of a girl called Millie. While her daddy is baking, she drinks a shrinking potion concocted by her granny in the garden shed. Both adults are commendably alternative role-models but are not including the child in their activities. So Millie downs the liquid, dwindles into an extremely weedy minor and vanishes into the vegetable patch, courtesy of a projected vortex and a set change to carrots and cauliflower painted large. There, Millie finds herself having to make friends with insects who rarely busy themselves with feelings or give unless getting in return.

Lavery's play has potentially winning ingredients: a touch of Lewis Carroll; the environs of David Bellamy at his most microscopic. Millie bonds with a caterpillar and does a deal with a dung beetle. The programme notes also include ecological facts. The intention seems to be to mix altruism with survival instincts — so I was unsure why Millie, while learning not to squish ants, continued to duff up earthworms.

Ruby Evans, her hair in buns, makes a convincing Millie, but is too bouncy. Agnieszka Kaushal's caterpillar is sweetly entertaining, while the dung beetle (Terence Frisch) is a leathery Victorian dandyman and anti-literbug. But the design lacks sophistication and Lavery's language, in spite of alliterative playfulness, sounds simplistic. The best-loved authors often write over children's heads — and thus stimulate growth.

CONCERTS: Rachmaninov played by rote and Berlioz with brio, but Amanda Roccroft tackles too much, too soon

The pity and the passion

Philharmonia/Yu
LPO/Norrington
Festival Hall

some novel antiphonal effects, and three choirs adding to the proceedings. It was a characteristically full-blooded, sometimes hair-raising, onslaught on Berlioz's treatment of the romantic tragedy.

The thunderous drum roll that ended the first of the seven movements gave chilling notice of the grief to come. It drew to a close a most beautifully delivered movement. Sarah Walker evoked the "unforgettable first captures" and the "vale of tears" with her inexpressible expressive mezzo.

John Mark Ainsley made a stylish but brief appearance as the tenor soloist, and the semi-chorus was the most professional, and best groomed, of the three choral ensembles: the Schutz Chorus of London. If the offstage partygoers in the Love Scene were a touch too raucous, it hardly diminished the melting harmonies and veiled sonorities of the strings in that evocative movement. Anything in the score that smacked of the idiosyncratic or the theatrical was seized on by Norrington and played for all it was worth.

To the Queen Mab Scherzo he brought humour as well as needlepoint delicacy, with some truly ethereal harmonies in the middle section. Though a little stretched at the top and bottom of his compass, Miguel Angel Zapater commanded both sympathy and respect as Friar Laurence. With the orchestra, London Philharmonia Choir and Brighton Festival Chorus all at full throttle, the final moments of the work were thrilling.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Lost for words

Amanda Roccroft
Wigmore Hall

Roccroft did not skimp at the Wigmore Hall — the first half lasted more than 50 minutes. She showed no sign of fatigue, but also brought little musical interest to her varied programme. It was dispiriting to find her old weaknesses — poor diction and little individuality — highlighted now by the loss of the creamy tone that had been her strong suit.

Opening with Haydn's *Scena di Berenice*, Roccroft sang with urgent intensity but would have communicated the varied emotions better in less plummy Italian. Her German is stronger, but her selection of Schubert *Lieder* was also generalised and uninvolved, though *Gretchen am Spinnrade* was an exception.

Stravinsky appears to suit Roccroft well, and she was happier in the quiet optimism of *Adorger* and the light, high-living lines of *Ständchen*. Even so, the humour of *Hat gesagt* seemed to come more from her facial expressions than voice.

She conjured up an appropriately earthy tone for the *Seven Spanish Popular Songs* by Falla, but then smoothed them out with vocalise-like projection. The ear was drawn to the more interesting contributions of the pianist, Malcolm Martineau. Roccroft had her moments in Britten's *On This Island*, articulating a good, smooth line in *Now the leaves are falling fast*, though she lacked the cabaret accents for *As It Is, Plenty*. With few of Auden's lines coming across, though, her account sounded incomplete.

JOHN ALLISON

Electric music for mind and body

JAZZ

Baseline
The Rhythmic, N1

BILLED as John Abercrombie's Baseline, but introduced as Hein van der Geyn's ditto, the trio comprising these two — guitarist and bassist respectively — and drummer Joe LaBarbera proved to be a model democracy. Purveying two sets of elegant, sophisticated but punchy chamber jazz, the three men interacted with a delicate spontaneity epitomised by the music produced in the various trios formed over the years by LaBarbera's most celebrated former employer, the late pianist Bill Evans.

Himself no stranger to trio settings — his Gateway Trio with Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette is still operating, 20 years after making its first recording — Abercrombie is justly celebrated for helping define and subsequently promulgate the musical values

espoused by ECM, the company for which he has recorded for the past 22 years. These include a scrupulous attention to detail and nuance, an ability to imbue superficially cerebral music with almost romantic lyricism, and the idea that jazz of truly lasting value can be produced by concentrating as much on the music's texture and overall structure as on more "jazzy" characteristics such as fierce swing and unbridled exuberance.

That these values were shared by both LaBarbera and Van der Geyn was obvious as soon as the trio eased themselves gently into their opener, the standard *Beautiful Love*. Behind the electric guitarist's tastefully spun lines and softly chiming chords, the Dutch bassist was considered and stately in his accompanying role, eloquent and unabashedly tuneful in his solos, the full-bodied gravity of his sound in no way compromising its lithe propulsiveness.

LaBarbera, unmatched this side of fellow Evans alumnus Paul Modan for his ability to impart discreet but powerful momentum to music at the slowest of tempos, patterned intelligently round his kit, constantly seeking the subtle side-drum embellishment or the precise shade of cymbal sound that would perfectly complement the others' playing.

Originals by Van der Geyn and Abercrombie followed.

the ballads eliciting exquisitely constructed solos from the latter which drew heavily on his trademark spangly guitar sound. But it was the second set's opener, Sonny Rollins's jazz-blues *Sonnyblues* for Two, that really allowed the trio as a whole, and Abercrombie in particular, to open up. The New York-born guitarist has always been notable for his ability to switch seamlessly between the understated jazz of the likes of Wes Montgomery or Jim Hall and the blistering axe-hero electronic noise associated with rock music, and he spent the rest of the evening reveling in both aspects of his prodigious talent. Van der Geyn and LaBarbera were with him every step of the way.

CHRIS PARKER

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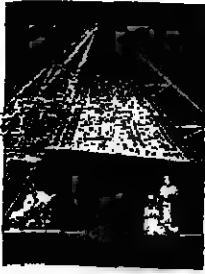
MICHAEL BALOGH
MARIA FRIEDMAN

PASSION

STEPHEN SONDHI
JAMES LAPINA

JEREMY SAMS
HELEN HOBSON

QUEEN'S THEATRE



■ OPERA

An oddity in The Netherlands, but a thrilling Mussorgsky staging opens in Belgium



■ CHOICE 1

The man is back: Eric Clapton starts his annual London residency

THE TIMES ARTS



■ CHOICE 2

Welsh National Opera stages Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*



■ CHOICE 3

It's European premiere night for Sondheim's *Passion*

OPERA: Rodney Milnes is ravished by *Khovanshchina* in Brussels, but let down in Amsterdam

A cross-Channel bargain at any price

Since it is now cheaper, thanks to current arts-funding policy, to go to the opera in Brussels and Paris than to Covent Garden, reports from across the Channel should perhaps be as frequent as those from Bow Street. Top price in Brussels is £50 (add a pound or two for Paris), Eurostar deals come in at less than £60, and there are regular matinees. Funny old world.

But it would be worth Covent Garden prices and more to catch the new production of *Khovanshchina* in Brussels, running until tomorrow. It is in every respect outstanding. If an opera company's strength is to be judged by the quality of its orchestra and chorus, then the Marmite under Bernard Foccroulle is in the safest of hands: it is a long time since I have heard such full-toned, superbly disciplined playing and singing (the chorus-master is Werner Nitzke) as that under Paul Daniel last week.

The Shostakovich orchestration is used, but with a new, contemplative ending (devised by J. David Jackson) probably closer to Mussorgsky's intentions. The composer's scribbled notes were also cited to justify some nips and tucks in a notoriously sprawling score. The results were unexceptionable save to the most rabid purist: what emerged was taut, constantly gripping drama quite faultlessly paced by Daniel.

Power, politics and intrigue do not change with the centuries, and Stein Winge's production is in non-specific contemporary dress and throws up visual references for the audience to juggle with to its heart's content. There is a vague look of the Red Army in Ivan Khovansky and the Streltsy; Golitsyn wears blazer and flannels; Shalokov is attended by spooks in raincoats and trilbies, increasing in number as he tightens his grip on power. Chilling, Winge's direction is quiet, concentrated and as disciplined as the music.

The international cast is as strong as



Chorus of approval: the stunning production of *Khovanshchina* in Brussels is "in every respect outstanding"

could be imagined: Willard White singing old Khovansky even more expressively than at the Coliseum last season; Elena Zuremba, warm and properly voluptuous as the mysterious Maria; Anatoly Kotachera granite-toned and unsettlingly fanatical as Dossley; Jacques Trussart as real smoothie-chops Golitsyn; Ronnie Johansen a horribly creepy Shalokov; Vladimir Bogachov an authentically ringing Andrei Khovansky. All follow Daniel's lead in emphasising the lyrical beauty of the music as well as its more obvious dramatic power. An unforgettable evening.

The combination of a top price of £40 and judicious scumming of bucket-shops also makes Amsterdam an attractive prospect, but a pause for reflection is recommended before rushing off to the Netherlands Opera's current revival of *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. Harry Kupfer's desperately bleak production is played out on Wilfried Wetz's metallic, clattery skeletal pyramid. Extraneous action as so often in Kupfer, regularly distracts attention from the music. Hofmannsthal's and Strauss's poetic vision is given little chance to weave its spell.

There are a few musical compensa-

tions. Jane Henschel and Thomas Moser sing the Nurse and the Emperor as well as anyone in living or recorded memory, and Ellen Shade is a likeable, involved Empress. Gabriele Schnatz was singing the Dyer's Wife for the first time: she has the notes and the stamina, but I find her slightly set-in-concrete tone and phrasing too unyielding. Harzmit Haenschel is the perfectly capable conductor but his workaday direction may have accounted for the fine Dutch baritone John Bruchner (Barak) sounding as less than his best. And an indifferent Frau makes for a very, very long evening.

LONDON

MUSICAL DEBUT The legendary Russian conductor Yevgeny Svetlanov makes his London debut at the grand age of 82. Tomorrow's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra programme features Mozart, Prokofiev and Rimsky-Korsakov. *Belshazzar's Feast*, Sat. 19.15. Tickets: £10-15. (0171-638 8811)

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ELSEWHERE The new production of <



POP 1

'I enjoy zero respect within the music industry,' says that gifted Scot, Edwyn Collins



POP 2

Lou Reed is back with *Set The Twilight Reeling*, a generally upbeat new solo album



POP 3

... while Maria McKee attempts, with mixed results, to play the wild child on *Life Is Sweet*



POP 4

... and Buffy Sainte-Marie talks about mixing protest songs with a little digital art

Is snow news good news?

LOCAL radio is the fastest growing medium in Britain, a fact which says much about the perceived gap between politicians and people. The former are moving towards ever-greater centralisation and ever-larger political units, while the latter increasingly want units they can handle.

At least, that is the received wisdom. I, however, believe the medium has expanded not as a demonstration of the desire to have local issues locally decided, but as a compensation for the fact that they are not.

Consider the case of Radio Smalltown, to give the medium a generic title, and the recent snows. Bad weather is good news for local radio; listening figures rise because people know the best information about the advisability of a trip from A to B will come out of the radio.

Once upon a time, the

RADIO

dominant suppliers of information to Radio Smalltown in such circumstances would have been local councils and the motoring organisations. Now, the listener calls the radio station about a blocked road and the radio station relays that information. Formal disseminators, such as councils, are bypassed.

In many parts of Britain, the percentage of the population listening to local radio is significantly larger than the percentage of electors who vote in local council elections. Radio Smalltown gets things done. Radio Smalltown influences issues. Stations in Berkshire, for example, have a significant role in the Newbury bypass debate. None of which need be a bad thing in itself. But we may be witnessing a sea change in the democratic process. Whereas an election is a simultaneous expression of the mass will, the use of Radio Smalltown is a dripfeed process with no evidence that it is representative of more than a limited lobby which enjoys the sound of its voice. No one on the business end of local radio can want this change to happen. But only the listeners can prevent it.

PETER BARNARD

Arch-outsider Edwyn Collins is a hit at last. David Sinclair finds him unrepentant

Don't call me popular

One should not be fooled by the gentle, friendly manner or the ready laugh. Edwyn Collins is a man who takes his outsider status seriously. Invited to come up with a snappy line about himself to include in the programme for next Monday's Brit Awards, the Scottish singer and songwriter with the proudest quiff in pop settled on: "Every pariah dog has its day."

"I enjoy zero respect within the music industry," he says, affably. This despite having been nominated in two categories of this year's instalment of the British industry's annual backslapping gala: Best British Solo Artist and Best British Single (for *A Girl Like You*).

"I've always been very forthright and — not wishing to sound too paranoid about it — I know that over the years I've made many enemies in high places," Collins says. Incredibly, given the international success of *A Girl Like You* and its parent album, *Gorgeous George*, both released on the tiny independent label Setanta, and licensed to a bewildering variety of independent labels throughout the world, Collins says that there have been no offers of lucrative contracts from the major record companies. "The only person who's invited my manager to come round for a meeting is Richard Branson."

But Collins is in no hurry to come in from the cold. "If these Brit nominations are some kind of belated acknowledgement of my contribution, then all I can do is repeat the old Groucho Marx maxim that I wouldn't wish to belong to any club that would have me as a member."

Born in Edinburgh in 1959, Collins had his first shot at stardom in Orange Juice, the Glaswegian group that straddled the divide between late-1970s punk and the New Romantic movement of the early 1980s without ever nailing its colours to either mast. They enjoyed their biggest hit with the single *Rip It Up*, which peaked at No 8 in 1983, but eventually foundered in 1985, due to various clashes of personalities. "Groups spend so much time bickering among themselves and thinking up put-downs, which is what we used to do."

After a long spell in the wilderness, during which he released two solo albums — *Hope and Despair* (1989) and *Hellbent on Compromise* (1990) — and produced records for other acts including Vic Godard, A House and Saint Etienne, Collins has enjoyed an unlikely renaissance, thanks to *A Girl Like You*. Recorded on a shoestring budget and released in September 1994, the song initially made a brief foray into the Top 50. However, various radio stations, notably Radio 1 and BBC Greater London Radio, remained entranced by the track's timeless combination of beat, soul and pop and kept playing it long after it had dropped out of the charts.

Meanwhile, it became a No 1 hit in Belgium, and then spread throughout the Continent, climbing the charts in France and Germany. Re-promoted in Britain last summer, it reached No 4. It has since charted in America, Australia and Japan and worldwide sales now stand at about two million copies. At the same time, *Gorgeous George* has sold more than 800,000 copies (*Hellbent on Compromise* sold 23,000).

Apart from bankrolling the Setanta label for the foreseeable future, *A Girl Like You* has enabled Collins to build his own dream recording studio.



In from the cold and up for a couple of Brits: life's looking good for Edwyn Collins since *A Girl Like You*

Tucked away in a North London mews, it is a functional-looking building with a faulty door-buzzer and a brand new burglar alarm that nobody seems quite sure how to operate.

The control room is a bizarre hodgepodge of equipment that looks as if it has simply sprouted up around a Neve mixing desk that most people would regard as an antique. To one side there is a massive tangle of wires customised from an old telephone exchange. Ancient guitars are slung across chairs. An oil lamp sits on top of the console. Collins proudly points out a gizmo with four big knobs on it that, he says, the late Joe Meek used to produce the sound of the Tornadoes, the instrumental group whose *Telstar* was a transatlantic No 1 in 1962.

Half tunesmith, half technophile, Collins is fascinated by the production of modern music as much as the music

itself. "I don't agree with the idea that the test of a really good song is whether you can sit down with an acoustic guitar and sing it and it'll sound great. Sound is not more important than songwriting, but a good song can be ruined by a bad or inappropriate production."

But he insists he is not part of rock's Luddite tendency, represented most prominently in recent times by Lenny Kravitz. "I installed the Neve desk because it's the best. It's not built any more because of financial constraints, not because the new desks are any better. But I'm just as fascinated with sampling technology. I'm simply trying to take the best from each era. I'm as excited by the production technique of Phil Spector as I am by [rap producer] Dr Dre."

With a new single, *Keep on Burning*, due for release on the day of the Brits,

Collins has no plans to relinquish his post as one of pop's arch mavericks. A song that pours gentle scorn on what he sees as the retro and jingoistic overtones of the Britpop revolution — "It's the same old story, England's glory/Claiming back the Union Jack" — *Burning* comes swathed in typically strange layers of production echo and lyrical irony.

"It's hard to be operating for 15 years without getting a bit ironic," Collins says. "I'm often reminded of the Frank Zappa album *Does Humor Belong in Music?* I take humour very seriously."

● The single *Keep on Burning* is released by Setanta on Monday

● Edwyn Collins is the special guest on Pulp's British tour, starting at Brighton Centre on Tuesday, continuing at Cardiff, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Limerick, Sheffield and ending at Wembley Arena on Mar 1

Return of the native

Paul Sexton on a protest singer in tune with the vibes of her ancestors and her Apple Mac

The contrast is unlikely. Buffy Sainte-Marie, born on a reservation in Saskatchewan, Canada, celebrated champion of Native American heritage, seasoned troubadour of history-laden protest songs, and Macintosh-friendly digital painter.

Buffy's *Up Where We Belong* album is a collection of new versions of the songs that made her name. As well as featuring the award-winning title track, familiar from the film *An Officer and a Gentleman*, it takes us back to the early 1970s with *Soldier Blue* and Elvis Presley recorded her melancholy *Until It's Time For You To Go*. But the album

is not the only fruit of her creativity. "I have lots of paintings on display in museums and galleries in Canada," she says proudly. "They're big — nine feet tall — all digital, all done over a period of eleven years since I got my first Macintosh."

The Sainte-Marie computer is rarely dormant, since it also provides the palette for her recordings. She sees no incongruity in songs steeped in indigenous tradition such as *Universal Soldier* and *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* undergoing a digital revival. "That's like a singer saying they won't use a tape recorder because it comes from the world of technology," she says. "As children, we don't distinguish whether we're playing with colour or playing with sound."

Sainte-Marie, 35 next week, returned to recording in 1991 after leaving it in the 1970s to raise her son — and to add another string to her overloaded bow as a *Sesame Street* presenter. Her comeback record, *Coincidence and Likelihood: Stories*, showed that her passion as a defender of the disadvantaged was undimmed. Now a teach-

er of both native studies and digital art, she decided to record her "old" songs because, she says, "I still feel them in the same way but I sing better now. When I was just a kid out of college, I couldn't sing my way out of a hat."

Until It's Time For You To Go was a worldwide hit and is her most-recorded song. Besides Elvis, it has been interpreted by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops Orchestra, Hildegard Neff and Vera Lynn, among others, and translated into many languages.

Up Where We Belong, which won her a Grammy and an Oscar in 1983, becomes an attractively sparse love song in the hands of its author. "There was no way I could top the Joe Cocker/Jennifer Warnes record, so I did the songwriter's version," she says. "There was no other way to do it, really."

Sainte-Marie's next appearance at an awards ceremony will be as a presenter at the Junos, the Canadian record industry honours, in Ontario next month. "Last year they honoured me by inducting me into the Juno Hall of Fame," she says proudly.

"Most professional evenings like that are a drag. I almost went to sleep at the Academy Awards. But the Junos is a great evening of music. Canadian talent is so diverse."

● *Up Where We Belong* is released by EMI on Feb 26



Digital direction: Sainte-Marie is happy to use high-tech resources

Well, hello, merry Lou, goodbye art

NEW ALBUMS: An upbeat Lou Reed returns to solo duties; plus high-grade hardcore from Dave Clarke

LOU REED

Set The Twilight Reeling (Warner Bros 9362-46159)

RETURNING to active duty as if the ill-fated Velvet Underground reunion of 1993 had never happened, Lou Reed picks up the thread of his solo career without missing a beat on *Set The Twilight Reeling*.

Thankfully, he has pulled himself out of the depression and despair that inspired his previous album, *Magic and Loss*. Instead, several songs revisit the scene of his greatest triumph, the New York album of 1989, although the scathing, world-weary tone of that classic is replaced here by a more upbeat mood.

"I'm a New York City man/Blink your eyes and I'll be gone," he warns mischievously on NYC *Man*, using his deadpan drawl to sketch only the faintest outline of a tune, while delegating the detailed work to an untypically elaborate horn-section arrangement.

Reed's greatest strength remains his uncanny ability to conjure a song from the simplest of building blocks. In *Hooky/Woody*, he paints a rooftop picture of the city — "Looking at the chemical sky/all purple, blue and oranges/some pigeons flying by" — over a childishly simple, chugging riff.

The skin-and-bones production of numbers ranging from

the jokey rocker *Egg Cream* to the earnest pseudo-soul of *Hang on to Your Emotions* further disguises the craft that goes into Reed's work, and even the more ambitious, sub-Hendrix pyrotechnics of *Rip Tide* tend to sound as if they have been rather casually knocked out.

He will need to make a more conspicuous effort if he is ever to produce another record as outstanding as *New York*, but this is fine for now.

DAVE CLARKE
Archive One (Deconstruction/BMG 743213007)

BESIDES elevating the DJ/producer from an ancillary role to that of performer in his own right, the most intriguing effect of computer-

ised studio technology is the way in which it has enabled the most sophisticated operators to break music down into its most primitive components.

Dave Clarke knows this better than most. A DJ from Brighton working in a field roughly similar to that of hardcore techno acts such as Moby and the Chemical Brothers, Clarke has fashioned *Archive One*, a monumental debut propelled almost entirely by stark, minimalist percussion loops, laced with forbidding sound effects and disorientating shards of noise.

Apart from the gothic, orchestral-synth introduction *Rhapsody in Red*, only one track, *Miles Away*, could be said to boast a tune, and even that soon withers away from

lack of harmonic nourishment. More typical is the ingeniously interlinked percussion and syncretic handclaps of *Rule of Two Cities* or the seismic overload of *Storm*, with its bass drum banging like a fist on a door while a synth simulates the sound of a swarm of bees. Elsewhere, odd snippets of speech contribute to the neurotic tension of *No One's Driving* — "That's the way the government planned it/Raped and pillaged every one on the planet".

Undoubtedly an acquired taste, the album is nevertheless stunning: a race into the future that is likely to induce whiplash among the unwary.

MARIA MCKEE
Life Is Sweet (Geffen GED 24819)

IN A career dogged by a series of identity crises, Maria McKee has finally come out as a bit of a wild child, now that Courtney, Tori and all the others have made it fashionable. Unfortunately, as with her previous attempts to play the roles of roots-rockers and sensitive singer-songwriter, *Life Is Sweet*, although performed to a high standard, does not quite ring true. A

spirited and sometimes jarring combination of loud guitar — played by McKee in a brash, angular style consciously influenced by the late Mick Ronson — and orchestral arrangements, songs such as *Sadlover* and *I'm Not Listening* better on the brink of hysteria. But scratch the surface drama and there is a lack of substance at the core.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Transpotting (EMI Premier 57190)

NATURALLY, no film that plumbs unspeakable depths of drug-induced degeneracy would be complete without a brilliant pop soundtrack — and here it is. It boasts previously unreleased tracks by Pulp, Leftfield, Primal Scream, Sleeper and Damon Albarn along with more familiar delicacies by New Order (*Temptation*), Elastica (2), and Blur (*Sing*) and a handful of standards, including Lou Reed's *Perfect Day* and Iggy Pop's *Lust for Life*.

Ironically, really, that with one or two exceptions (Primal Scream's instrumental title track is a bit murky), it should turn out to be such a generally cheerful collection of songs.

DAVID SINCLAIR

● Caitlin Moran is on holiday

MARIA MCKEE

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- 5 Jagged Little Pill.....Alanis Morissette (Maverick)
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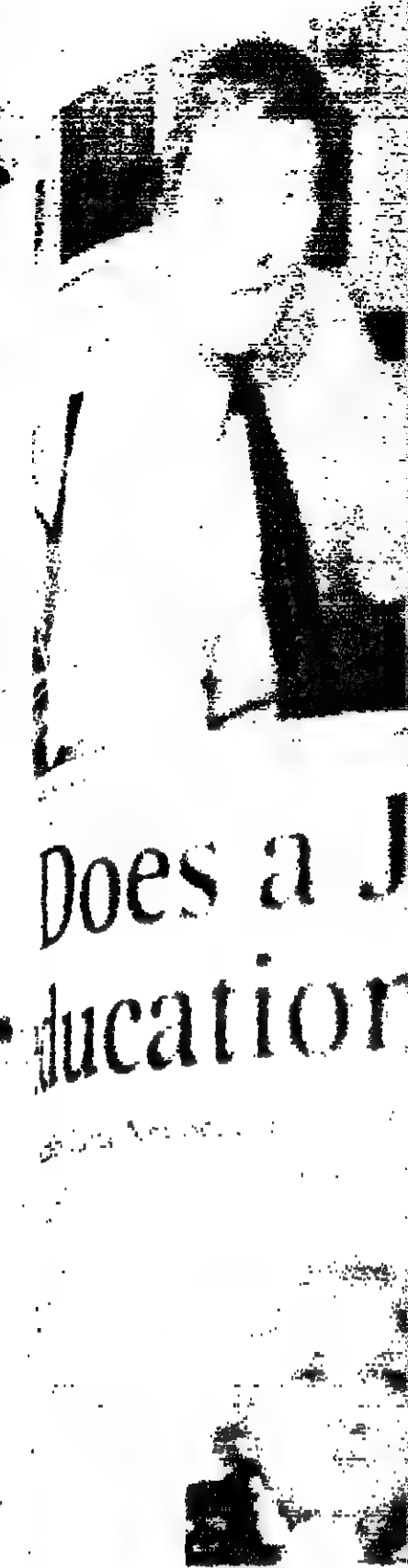
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EDUCATION

Austin Mitchell, the graduate of Suez

In the first of a series on celebrities and their universities, Jonathan Sale hears a story of dramatic political conversion



Labour MP Austin Mitchell: "I was an obnoxious little swot"

Some say that it was the University of Life which made them what they are. You could say that Austin Mitchell is a graduate of the University of Suez.

Technically he is a graduate with a BA and MA from Manchester University followed in "by mistake" and Oxford (where he gained his PhD after getting in "through the back door"). But it was the wave of protest over the disastrous invasion of 1956 which ultimately got him where he is, which is Labour MP for Great Grimsby and the only person in television's *Annie's Bar* with a witty line.

"I was a perennial student," he says, "but I drifted into university. I went to Bingley Grammar School, West Yorkshire. Most of my contemporaries went into the wool trade and later became unemployed when it contracted.

"At 15 I was turned down for a job at Balldon Combing, so I stayed on at school.

"I did quite well at examinations and got a state scholarship. No one from our school had gone to Oxford or Cambridge but the headmaster said: 'You might try Oxford; go to the library and get the university calendar out.' I looked at the prospectus but it was all about colleges and I didn't understand a word, so in 1952 I went to Manchester University. They accepted me by mistake. I accidentally allowed in without the obligatory Latin O level, he had to take it during his first year.

"I liked Manchester. It was utilitarian, homely (that is, they were like me) and serious (but not

intellectual). I was in a hall of residence, Montgomery House. It was a very religious place, a YMCA. We thought ourselves riotous but I don't remember getting drunk. I missed out on the so-called character-building aspects of university life. I used to go rather hogs where they had the Northern Dance Orchestra, and to rag balls. If there was a uniform, it was corduroy and Harris tweed.

"I was an obnoxious little swot," he declares. "I wanted to go on and become an academic." After a year of French he switched to the three-year history degree, followed by a one-year MA. Oddly enough, the future television presenter and ebullient MP kept his

head down. He was no student revolutionary. He came from a Tory working-class family, became a Liberal and did not join the Labour Party until his final year. He spent the summer of 1956 working — and arguing — in a Co-op biscuit factory with Paul Rose, an enthusiastic Marxist who later became a Labour MP.

"It was a late conversion," he says. It was vastly strengthened by the Conservative Government's "monstrous" decision to invade

He did end up in Oxford, at Jesus, after all. "Through the back door," he says, although being a PhD student sounds very much like a front-door entry.

He followed his history supervisor, Gaitskill biographer Phillip Williams, to Nuffield College, a marvellous swapshop of ideas presided over by David Butler, the psephologist, who was then in his prime.

"Oxford was exotically privileged and I reacted adversely. I felt like the Porterhouse Blue character who shoves inflated contraceptives up the chimney." One of his undergraduate contemporaries was whipped out of his history degree course to "inherit" his daddy's safe seat in Parliament. What with lecturing and working in television, Austin Mitchell himself took rather longer to make it to *Annie's Bar* and, indeed, *Annie's Bar*.

Does a Jewish education work?

Rabbi Julia Neuberger reflects on the implications of a startling report into the attitudes of British Jewry

A comprehensive survey of the social and political attitudes of the British Jewish community was published yesterday to launch the Institute for Jewish Policy Research. It makes fascinating reading.

One of the findings in particular should bring joy to *The Times* Editor and writers. *The Times* comes out as the broadsheet paper most widely read by the Jewish community — 15 per cent of the sample read it.

The research also illustrates a growing sector of British Jews who feel firmly and securely rooted in British society, who do not regard themselves as living in "exile" of any kind, do not believe Jews are more tolerant than anyone else, nor that Jews behave in such a way as to cause hostility to be directed towards them.

The survey shows that the rate of male intermarriage with non-Jewish women is as high as 44 per cent in the crucial younger ages (under 40). And it reveals that Jews are more likely to identify with the Jewish community through their attachment to religious ritual than through their religious faith.

These figures, the result of the largest survey of self-identifying Jews ever carried out in this country, will force the leaders of the Jewish community to look again at how to strengthen that community. Though aware of the intermarriage rate, we have not welcomed non-Jewish spouses. Rather, we have tended to exclude the Jewish-born



Rabbi Julia Neuberger

partner of a mixed marriage, thus losing yet another family.

Though we have suspected that people identify with ritual rather than with faith, we have not thought creatively about how to build on this "ritualistic" Jewish community. Our synagogues in particular have been slow to widen the range of services they provide. Hence it should be no surprise that one in three people identifying themselves as Jewish is not a member of a synagogue at all, even though that was how one associated with the community in the past.

But the most startling conclusion of all is that the great nostrum against assimilation valued by all today's community leaders, Jewish schooling (and specifically Jewish day-school education), makes very little difference to whether Jews associate with the community in later life. It is family background, the social and religious dynamics of

the family, that are the determinants of Jewish life choices.

This is important. The Jewish community now has one in six children in Jewish day-school education. The argument has been that this will halt the decline of the community. Even my own non-orthodox community has followed this path with Akiva School, and another is set to follow. But the evidence is not there. It is family that matters, not Jewish schooling. Added to that, there are moral arguments against sectarian education.

Children who will grow up in a multi-faith community should learn to live together, and they can only learn that by being at school together. That does not mean that religious education should be excluded from schools, as Americans have it. Religion is too important a part of life to be excluded from schools, and some understanding of it should be part of general education. But religious education should be about religions, rather than indoctrination in any one religion.

The 1988 Education Act was wrong in making religious education and assemblies broadly Christian. Children should be encouraged to explore their own religions, and hear about other people's.

It is parents who should do the religious indoctrination. The Institute for Jewish Policy Research suggests that schools are ineffective in building up a sense of religious



The most startling conclusion is that Jewish schooling has little bearing on whether Jews associate with their community in later life

identity and religious commitment. The Jewish experience suggests that it is parents and the wider family, rather than the schools, who can succeed in doing this.

We ought therefore to re-examine separatist education tendencies, and think more about how families can best inculcate religious loyalty and values, instead of leaving the task to the schools. Indeed, some evidence suggests that sectarian education is actively harmful. It can lead to sectarian tensions, or at

least extend their life, as Northern Ireland has shown. The Jewish experience is not unique. Roman Catholic education in Britain and America has failed to increase association with Catholicism. People "lapse", irrespective of their education.

The emphasis on educational remedies may arise because it is much easier to establish sectarian schools than to influence behaviour in the home. More work needs to be done on Jewish family patterns, to

understand how the family dynamics strengthen Jewish identity. We need to think of ways of encouraging families to celebrate festivals in the home such as Passover, because children will remember it and associate with it, when they have forgotten the Hebrew they learnt at school.

Authors such as Bernard Wasserstein and Norman Cantor warn of a collapse of Diaspora Jewry. This is reinforced by today's evidence. How acute the danger is

may be a matter of dispute. But I believe that we can halt the decline. The solution has to be within the wider community, not by narrow retreat into the ghetto of sectarian education. It means being braver about what Jews stand for, braver about our attitude to social justice, intermarriage, and general education, and, now that we are confident in our Britishness, braver about standing up for other minorities, arguing that they too can make a contribution to the wider society.

Susan Elkin says children should attempt serious drama and music productions

Do put your pupils on the stage...

It does not matter how talented or otherwise you are at drama, music or backstage work; if, in your youth, you took part in any kind of school production it will be ingrained in your memory as one of the high spots of your schooldays.

No doubt you learnt much from it too. For me it was singing in Benjamin Britten's *Now's Fludd*, playing the violin in an inter-schools performance of Haydn's *The Creation* under Sir David Willcocks and being part of a sort of Greek chorus in a dramatized version of Dylan Thomas's *Holiday Memory* (When the sun declared war on the butter, and the butter ran...).

Few things offer as much cross-curricular educational enhancement as putting on a play, concert or show. We hear a deal about the value of teamwork these days. The proponents are usually blinkered advocates of more team games and sport. But productions offer a valuable chance to be a team member too. Only last term I watched a moving and commendably ambitious school production of Arthur Miller's *Auschwitz Play* performed by a large, all-female cast in a small space. The sense of cohesion among actors and technicians was palpable. Lucky girls to have been given that opportunity.

Plays do wonders for self-esteem too. It is fashionable to knock the concept of self-esteem as an excuse for selfish, hedonistic amorality: simplistic nonsense, of course. Those with a healthy sense of self-esteem are mentally balanced, at ease with themselves and the world. A young person can achieve near miracles of personal development through a school play. I co-directed a dramatisation of Ian Serraill-

ier's *The Silver Sword* a few years ago. In the course of rehearsals our stage manager, a mouse of a 12-year-old child whom we had, to our shame, hardly noticed previously, emerged from the ranks. She was a natural and became totally indispensable to the whole project. *The Silver Sword* was a major turning point for that girl — she blossomed progressively thereafter.

And what about getting to know the work of important playwrights and composers? There is no substitute for the internal perspective you get from taking part in a play when it comes to understanding what it is all about. My son had a one-line part as a citizen in a whole-school production of *Romeo and Juliet* when he was about 14 — a tiny contribution, but it meant that he attended many rehearsals which has left him with a permanent in-depth knowledge of the play.

That is why the choice of play is so important. I despair of schools which seem to alternate between *Bugsy Malone* and *Grease* — with *Annie* thrown in occasionally for light relief — because that is the current fashionable rut. Little of any real, lasting worth seems to get a look in.

It is all very well for head teachers — pragmatic eyes on the prospect of "income generation" — to argue for an unrelieved diet of large-scale American which will

maximise ticket sales. What about the educational experience of the performers and back-stage crew? A school's prime responsibility is to the education of its pupils — not to the entertainment of the local community.

Although a few schools still attempt Shakespeare occa-

sionally there seems to be a dreadful dearth of anything much else that is worthwhile. Who is performing Shaw, Ibsen, Chekhov, Bolt and Shaffer — to name but a handful of "greats"?

Why aren't schools having a go at quality opera and even, dare I say, an occasional



An unchanging diet of *Grease* will teach very little

opera? I know of one prep school and one city technology college which produced Gilbert and Sullivan operas in 1995 — *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Ruddigore*, respectively — but that is rare today. It is a great opportunity missed too. Not only are they part of our heritage but they are accessible, very funny and, incidentally, a good source of British social history.

And as for musicals, yes of course there is no reason why schools shouldn't do one occasionally in the interests of variety. But why does it almost always have to be American? The lazy throat croon is ugly, the diaphragm is a no-go zone and it is all churned into a microphone in that phoney "mid-Atlantic" accent. What is the matter with *My Fair Lady* or *The Sound of Music*? Are they ignored because they are too clean and straightforward? What an indictment of the way we always tend to give children what we have conditioned them (and their parents?) to think they want.

Most worrying are the schools who don't put on drama and music productions at all. Sadly the strikes and withdrawal of goodwill by large numbers of teachers in the mid-Eighties have left a long legacy. In some cases lack of commitment to extracurricular activities — sports matches, trips, plays — has become a habit and, unfortunately, part of the flavour of the school.

Far from being just a bit of window dressing, school productions are vital to the enhancement of the education of pupils. Every child should have the opportunity of being part of a school play. There should be lots of them happening in every school so that the children experience a really rich mixture.

A new door opens for classroom 'failures'

Iola Smith reports on a Welsh initiative to launch a new qualification

Pass rates in public examinations may be rising year by year, but still as many as one teenager in 12 is leaving school without qualifications. With Sir Ron Dearing due to report next month on provision for the 16-19 age group, a little-noticed initiative in Wales may be timely.

The Principality is launching a new qualification called the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CEA) for non-academic 16-year-olds. Courses designed for the 7 to 8 per cent of pupils unable to pass GCSE will begin next September. The first of them will be examined in the summer of 1996.

Unlike the old certificate, the CEA is strictly targeted. According to Roderick Rich-

'It will raise some pupils' self-esteem and they will leave school motivated'

ards, Education Minister for Wales, it is designed specifically for those pupils who failed to reach level three (which is expected of the average nine-year-old) in national curriculum subjects at age 14.

That does not mean, however, that pupils will be prevented from sitting a mixture of GCSEs and CEAs. For example, pupils likely to achieve GCSE grade G in English and humanity sub-

jects will be able to sit those at GCSE level, in combination with, say, science and maths at CEA level.

Other pupils will be able to sit all their exams at CEA-level, while youngsters whose schools are uncertain whether they could pass GCSE may be entered for both qualifications. That way they can at least achieve a CEA.

The content of CEA courses will often parallel GCSE in many respects. For example, in English pupils will study Shakespeare (although perhaps focusing more on video interpretations) and their reading lists will be shorter than the GCSE.

Wales's Curriculum and Assessment Authority expects that up to 31 subject options will be available at CEA-level. They will include all national curriculum subjects, plus additional modern languages such as Spanish and Japanese, together with studies in topics such as childcare, textiles and drama.

Considerable emphasis will be placed on coursework and school-based assessment, and it is expected that pupils who pass CEA will be graded on three levels. The grades' names have yet to be confirmed, but they are likely to be pass, merit and distinction.

The WJEC is convinced that CEA's great strength is its role as a stepping-stone to further educational achievement. By 1998 it will be accepted as an entry qualification by further education colleges, and it is expected that students armed with CEAs will be able to build on their knowledge to achieve further vocational or academic qualifications.

Bradley to S

Praise to Masters. I hope they flourish. In Lady Pasha's old home, which is now lushly appointed as any office in the land, executives work to further their clients' ambitions. Kasparov wants to go in politics, they are creating for him a smart-casual image via commercials for designer clothes and non-Lada cars.

They are also combating Mike Carr's proneness to have less remarkable (like "I'll kick Rod Andrew into touch") than more remarkable ("I have a really mean gut") comments.

Andous' admiration for Mr Andrew but I too, am at risk to convert penalties. A professional journalist has been employed by the management to sit down and advise the England full back on the dangers of spontaneous soundbites.

A MOMENT of fame can be double-edged sword. It can either lift your confidence to new heights or weigh you down so you sink like a stone. The two newcomers to fame in Dubai, Kare! Novacek and Sando Stolle, were at opposite ends of the spectrum yesterday (Alix Ramsay writes).

Novacek wilted under the serving power of Goran Ivanisovic while Stolle battled through to the quarter-finals against Andrei Chesnokov. Novacek's future was acquired for all the wrong reasons today he will learn how far the drug allegations against him have proceeded — and against the No.4 seed, the pressure showed. At first he was outplayed, then he fought back briefly, but eventually lost 6-3, 7-5. "He was not too confident as he was before," said Ivanisovic.

Stolle did not let the effects of Wednesday's loss over Thomas Muster slow him down. As the son of Fred Stolle, he has seen his share of life as a tennis professional. His father would not allow any slacking when Sando was growing up. "But it is better to have a father who has taught you than one who pampers you," he said.

"And coming from my family I have been around a lot of good tennis players." All which should stand him in good stead in the seed-free heat of the draw.

No practice

Skiing: Heavy snow and poor visibility led to the cancellation of practice for the downhill races at the world championships in Sierra Nevada, Spain, yesterday.

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a. Greasy
b. With a big bottom
c. Like an earthworm

Answers on page 42

White to play and mate in two moves. This position completes a week celebrating the problems composed by the teenage chess prodigy Lilian Baird. She composed this position in 1896, when 15 years old. The black king has tremendous freedom in the centre of the board but White can nevertheless force mate in two moves. Can you see how?

Solution on page 42

CRICKET
Reports and scores
from the World Cup
Call 0891 881 461

FOOTBALL
Kick-off 7.30 unless stated

BOND GAYS LEAGUE OF IRELAND:
Premier division: Bohemians v Cork

OTHER SPORT:
BASKETBALL: Budweiser League Birmingham v Leicester (7.30); London v Sheffield (8.15);
BOWLS: Churchill Insurance world indoor championships (Preston);
SNOOKER: Sweater Shop International Open (Swindon);
TENNIS: LTA men's satellite tournament (Chipswall); LTA women's satellite tournament (Sheffield).

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**SKI
CLUB**

BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

It earned him a place in the A international against Scotland last month but the clinching appearance was on January 31. The Irish selectors flocked to Ravenhill to see Ulster play New South Wales and within five minutes, Humphreys had scored a



brilliant solo try reminiscent of older spectators, of the great Kyle Humphreys has no doubts that the 40-33 win represented the best rugby he has ever seen. Humphreys has played during his career.

"I'm delighted to have played at Twickenham in front of such a big crowd because that will help prepare us for Paris," Humphreys

who will be Ireland's first-choice goalkicker tomorrow, said. "But I take each game on its merits and I really enjoy the big Irish rugby. Kyle [Humphreys, Ireland coach] has us to go out and attack the French, rather than opt for a policy of containment, and that has always been my aim."

"I think I have been lucky to see the outstanding backs that we have, who are as good as any others around," Ireland have not performed well in Paris since 1980, but maybe Humphreys can be the catalyst to change that.

■ Simon Gheoghean failed a fitness test on his troubled hamstring yesterday. His place on the right wing for Ireland goes to Richard Wallace of Garryowen.

An American in London. Radio 3, midnight.

[illegible]

Lunchtime Concerto. *Classic FM, 2.00pm.*

There is a poster I offer grants to any compiler of music quiz questions who may be desperate for one which Beethoven second movement opens with the first six notes of *Danny Boy*. You can hear the answer this afternoon. It is the arduous from the Triple Concerto, and Leonard Solists are Eugene Istomin, piano, Isaac Stern, violin, and Leonard Rose, cello. Another Eugene, Ormandy, conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra. Unbelievably, Eugene is cold-shouldered by the audience at its first performance. Nothing to do with Beethoven, though, as the quiz just could not agree on whether they were stronger in brasses than as three solists. Peter Davalle

WORLD SERVICE

All times in GMT. 5.00am Newsday
6.30 Europe Today 6.00 Newsday 6.30
Europe Today 7.00 News 7.15 Off
the Shelf 7.30 Surviving 8.00 News 8.10
Faith 8.15 Music Review 9.00 News in
German 9.15 Faith 9.45 Sports 10.00
Newsday 10.30 BBC English 10.45 Off
the Shelf 11.00 Newsday 11.30 Mending
the Wall 12.00 News 12.05am Business

5 Britain Today 12.30 Saturday
Hour 2.00 News 2.05 Outdoors
Female Attraction 3.00 Na

German 3.15 Music Review 4.00 News
4.15 The World Today 4.30 News in
German 5.00 Europe Today 5.30
Business 5.45 Sport 6.00 Newscast:
6.30 News in German 7.00 News
Summary 7.01 Outlook 7.25 Words of
Faith 7.30 Multitrack: Alternative 8.00
Newshour 9.00 News 9.05 Business
Report 9.15 Britain Today 9.30 People
10.00 Newscast: 10.30 The World Today
10.45 Sport 1.00 News 11.10 Spotlight

15 The Legacy of Colonialism

12:30am From the weekends 12:30
 Breakfast Today 1.00 News 1.10 Press
 Review 1.15 Seven Days 1.30 Jazz Now
 and Then 1.45 Good Books 2.00
 Newsday 2.50 People 3.00 News 3.15
 Sport 3.30 Vintage Chart Show 4.00
 Newsskz 4.30 Jazz 4.45 Seven Days

CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Griffiths 6.00 Nick Bailey
 9.00 Henry Kelly 12.00 Susannah
 Simon 2.00pm Lunchtime Concerto
 See Choice 3.00 Jamie Cirk 6.00
 Newsday 6.30 Sonets 7.00 Classic
 World 8.00 Evening Concert 10.00

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00pm Russ 'n' Jong 8.00 Richard
Slerner 12.00 Graham Dore 4.00pm
Nicky Home 7.30 Paul Coyte 10.00
Mark Forrist 2.00-8.00pm Howard
Palmer

2.00 Schools. Let's Make a Story
2.15 Music Box 2.30 Dance
Workshop 2.50 Poetry Corner
--- **3.00 Mining the Archive.** Janet
Baker, mezzo, at the 1971
Aldeburgh Festival
4.20 By the Waters of Babylon.
The Rev Alan Walker visits the

Coptic Orthodox church in
Kensington High Street (7)
A List of Ministers of Coptic

Asia. Uzbek ethnomusicologist Ruzia Sultanova talks to John Thornley about the musical and cultural traditions of Bokhara, Tashkent and Samarkand

5.00 *The Music Machine* with Eleanor Alberga (1)

5.15 In Time, Including Czorny (Variations brillantes); Gesualdo, comp. Stravinsky (Tre sicca cantiones)

7.30 *Be in America* live from the Royal Court Hall in Glasgow. The first of three concerts from the Festival of American Music and Arts.

Trio, Robin Williams, oboe
with the Scottish Chamber

Orchestra, under Yoel Levi.
Ives (The Unanswered
Question); Copland (Quiet
City; Appalachian Spring);
B. Britten (The Weyward with Bob
Gilbert, \$4.00 Barber
(Carnotato); Ellington (I, afeife
Zwisch (Triple Concerto))

9.30 **Towards Musical**
Democracy. How the
composer Frank Denyer
draws on musical traditions
from around the world

9.55 **Hear and Now.** Robert
Ziegler in conversation with
Tom Dur

12.00-1.00 **Am An American in**
London. She, Chris

Government Inspector at the West Yorkshire Playhouse
4.45 Short Story: Just
 Dealing by Jenny Boston
Read by Tim Fildes
8.00 PM with Jon Sopel and
 Jackie Hartridge **5.50**
 Shipping **5.55 Weather**
6.00 Sir O'Clock News
6.30 Going Places with David
 Stafford
7.00 News 7.05 The Archers
7.20 Piece of the Week
 with Christopher Serle
8.05 Any Questions? Jonathan
 Dimbleby chairs a topical
 discussion at the University of

Mike Heath, director general of the Engineering Council.

- 7.00 **Final Hours of the Day**
 7.00 **60 Minutes** with
 Sir Jonathan Penrit; and
 Baroness Shirley Williams,
 Labour Democrat peer
- 8.50 **Letter in Action** with Marcel
 Berlins
- 9.15 **Letter from America** by
 Cooke
- 9.30 **Kaleidoscope Features.**
 The success story of the television
 series *Str Trek* (tr. 9.59)
- 10.00 **The World Tonight**
- 10.45 **Book at Bedtime:**
 The Ghost Horse of Genghis
 Kahn by Russell Hoban
- 11.00 **Play:** David Horowitz
 with Sally Grace, Jeffrey
 Holland and Toby Longworth
- 11.25 **News** and **Column**
- 11.45 **News in Parliament**
- 12.00 **Today, in 12-27am Weather**
 The **Latin Babel:** The Countess
 by Susan Ruschie, *Revered*
 by Sam Davis (tr. 3)
- 12.48 **Shipping Forecast 1.00 As**
World Service

99.8. RADIO 2, FM 88.1

3. RADIO 5 LIVE MW 883, 909, WORLD SERVICE MW 648; LW 130; LW 3 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO FM 5.8; MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO UK MW 1053, 1089. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dour, Gillian Murray, Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson.

Lanka next Wednesday. "At the moment we are not changing our mind, we are still playing in Sri Lanka," Andy Flower, their captain, said. Wes Hall, the West Indies manager, had some scathing words to say yesterday about people who do not change their minds. "Henry Kissinger said that only an idiot could not change his mind," he said, before adding: "But as far as we are concerned the West Indies Board of Control will

but I would like to see England play five matches in

one-day series. I think the public would like it. I believe it will not affect our five-day cricket and it provides some of the most exciting cricket you could wish to see," he said.

The TCCB has pushed the

matches against India and Pakistan this summer but

Terry Blake, the board's marketing manager, said yesterday: "We have not gone along with the proliferation of one-day internationals in the past and this year is an exception to our usual policy. Next year we will be back to three matches against Australia."

That's Hall, folks

Disregarding fears of terrorist violence, Zimbabwe are to go ahead with their match in Sri

[illegible]

Answers from page 37
AUTO-DA-FÉ
(c) The burning of a heretic, as of Spanish "an act of faith". Origin accompanying the pronouncement authorities, after which the victim referred to as the auto-da-fé itself replaced, as an instrument for mass by the equally incendiary Vatican nearest thing to the auto-da-fé act of immolation. The act of faith

(b) The state of being nowhere. This incarnation proves difficult to capture.

use. But no incomprehensible
conclusion. James, on behalf of all y
wish you an unimpaired nullibiety
ENCHIRIDION

(c) A posth Greek word for a handbo
the hand. "I admire your new car

(c) Like an earthworm, by, with, to, respect your ambitions as a body-b just too lumbricoid."

1 Kc2! leads to mate after 1... Kfb 2

B B C The Complete Monthly Guide to Classical Music

music

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MUT136

Mismatched music guilty of sonic insecticide

There is, of course, a logical explanation for the extraordinarily intrusive music in last night's new insect series *Alien Empire* (BBC1). Scripts were mixed up in the post, that's all. The script received by composer Martin Kizsko was a mixed-genre space-age western three-hanky job, and he slaved away in isolation under a complete misapprehension until — too late — the mistake was discovered. "What shall we do?" panicked the Natural History Unit, buzzing like flies, and flapping the score with invisible speed, like a bee's wing. "Just put it in the programme. Joe Public won't notice a thing!"

And so they persuaded themselves, and finally forgot there was ever a problem. They sat in viewing rooms, watching the sequence where the luminescence of the jewel beetle was displayed against music headed "Boy Confederate Soldier Returns on

Crutches across Corn Field to the Shack of his Now-Blind Ma", and told themselves, "It's all right. Actually, it's quite all right."

But it wasn't. Whereas everything on the screen in *Alien Empire* is absorbingly interesting, everything on the soundtrack is awful. The script is delivered by John Shrapnel at his most bass and serious, and it has a habit of likening insects to machines which is irritating and reductive. ("The brain of a bee," intones Shrapnel, "a masterpiece of micro circuitry.") And then, just when you think you can watch some insects doing insect-y things, cinematic melody floods in like syrup, as the string section of the Munich Symphony Orchestra (nothing less) turns the page to find, "Mary Brings Teddy to have his Kissed Better."

Perhaps Cezanne is the answer, though I have been wary of using subtitles ever since watching the damage done to a *Horizon* about

an obscure salmon-type fish called (I think) a "eulachan", when the Cezanne operator assumed the word was "hooligan", which is not the same. I will never forget the surreal image: "The hooligan, desperate to reach its mating ground, now leaps upstream." I therefore hesitate to recommend this course. But the historians in *Alien Empire* are turned up too loud. Watching Cezanne with the sound off may be the only way of reducing the impact.

Still, *Alien Empire* was pretty unsetting for good reasons as well as bad. Insects have lived on this planet for 400 million years; they regard the human race as fly-by-nights. And when you start to look at their biology, they are seriously weird and otherworldly: they need oxygen but don't have lungs; they have teeny brains yet they process images at phenomenal speeds. To a house-

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

fly, television pictures are not continuous but a succession of individual lines travelling up-screen. To such a quick-thinking insect, therefore, the job of television critic would be irksome and it would pronounce all programmes too slow. Next time you see a fly buzzing frantically against an open window, it will be worth remembering all this.

After such a jolt to one's percep-

tions, ordinary programmes looked peculiar too. And it didn't help that BBC2's *Three Colours Cezanne* was concerned with the early part of the painter's career, when he, likewise, seemed to be visiting from another world. True, Cezanne was up from the country but that was the least of his handicaps: his early work, when not concentrating on nude up violence, was still mainly violent or contained nouns. Cezanne had a fierce touch taboo, an authoritarian father, and a penchant for Wagner. He thought once of murdering his family, but luckily remembered (just in time) that they were useful to him, as sitters.

Three Colours Cezanne divides his work chronologically into pink, green and blue and an ingenious and simple basis for the series. Last night's film was literate and informative, although occasionally fell into the trap of many art programmes: a critic describes a

detail in a picture, and his words are immediately contradicted by the picture itself. Last night it was Cezanne's *The Rape*, in which the female figure was described as "this poor woman, screaming". Upon which a close-up silently revealed she was limp and comatose, with hardly a mouth at all.

Finally, Channel 4's *Food File* has a campaign for us all to join. It's called "Adopt a Veg" and if it sounds nuts to you, it certainly sounded nuts to me. Evidently there is "havoc" in the vegetable kingdom, these days; varieties of veg are disappearing fast, and the only way to conserve them is to send urgent money to the Henry Doubleday Research Association, where seeds are preserved in an archive. "Stop the Vegetable Massacre!" is the rallying call. The champions are Nigel Slater (cookery writer) and Thelma Barlow on *Coronation Street*.

And personally, I don't know whether to laugh or cry.

I mean, can't they see where all this will lead? Once vegetables are understood to be a persecuted minority, insanity prevails. People caught using the innocent expression "small potatoes" are hauled up for vegism. When Bogart, in *Casablanca*, makes that speech about the hill of beans, audiences nut-nut and suck their teeth, making no allowance for the primitive veg attitudes prevailing in wartime. Sensitive types flock to buy copies of *The Lady of Shalott*, they are horribly disappointed when it turns out to centre on a madwoman with a mirror. Word gets round: Alfred Lord Tennyson does not know his onions.

Meanwhile, it was not explained what happens when you get a photograph. But it seems unlikely that it writes to you from time to time, to tell you how it's getting on.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (21784)
6.00 BBC Breakfast News (Cesfax) (20595)
9.00 Breakfast News Extra (Cesfax) (498387) 9.20 Casualty (Went) (3064622) 9.45 Killybegs (3062826) 10.30 Good Morning (61149)

12.00 News (Cesfax) and weather (6851603)
12.05pm Turnabout (a) (2038711)
12.30 Going for a Song (a) (43651)
1.00 One O'Clock News (Cesfax) and weather (55142)

1.30 Regional News (7370068)
1.40 Neighbours (Cesfax) (a) (3415705)
2.00 Pebble MIB (a) (506808) 2.40 Moon over Miami (Cesfax) (a) (470851)

3.30 The Latest Part Shop (a) (5816974)
3.50 Look Sharp! (a) (110974) 4.00 The All New Pop Show (a) (267500) 4.15 Julia Jayland and Harriet Hyde (Cesfax) (a) (306413) 4.30 The Mask (Cesfax) (a) (317559) 4.55 Newsround Extra: The Children of Chernobyl (Cesfax) (1854249) 5.10 Blue Peter (Cesfax) (a) (146814)

5.35 Neighbours (a) (Cesfax) (a) (541449)
6.00 Six O'Clock News (Cesfax) and weather (555)

6.30 Regional news magazine (857)
7.00 Gag Tag. Bob Monkhouse hosts the gag for stand-up comic (Cesfax) (a) (9981)

7.30 Tomorrow's World. Includes a look at the pioneering facility which the Metropolitan Police will use to protect the city's major events, plus a new technique for spotting previously invisible tumours with a low-energy light beam (Cesfax) (a) (371)

8.00 Just Good Friends. Perry and Mike make a surprise announcement (Cesfax) (2595)

8.30 A Question of Sport. David Coleman leads his questions to the 1996 British Open in golf and the 1996 British Grand Prix in cycling (Cesfax) (a) (4518)

9.00 Nine O'Clock News (Cesfax) and weather (2326)

9.30 Into the Fire. The dedication of the Merchant's navy. Michael Rice has resigned from his job but he has not given up his quest for justice, and Lyn James of Frank's column (Cesfax) (a) (50061) 10.15 5.30 PM Tonight 10.20 into the Fire 11.20 Film: The Fly (1986) (2595) 11.30 M.I. 2: Conquered the World (1958)

10.30 Film: The Fly (1986) starring Jeff Goldblum and Geena Davis. David Cronenberg's repulsive, entertaining remake of the cult 1958 horror movie. A scientist obsessed with teleportation takes part in one of his own experiments with dire consequences (Cesfax) (a) (2246794) 11.30 M.I. 2: Conquered the World (1958)

11.30 M.I. 2: Conquered the World (1958) starring Peter Cushing and Michael York. A man who lives in the shadow of a sinister castle where, legend has it, vampires dwell. Directed by John Hough (584514)

1.30am Weather (5106659)

VideoPlus and the Video PlusCode
The names next to each TV programme listing are VideoPlus numbers, which allow you to program your video recorder to watch a VideoPlus broadcast. VideoPlus can also be used to program your VCR to watch a programme you wish to record. For more details, see the VideoPlus section on page 44.

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BBC2

8.00am Open University: Biology — Body Plans (227424) 8.25 What is Music? (278063) 8.50 Panel Pointing (588806)
7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (Cesfax) and weather (55142) 7.30 Salinger (a) (46448) 8.00 F.O.T. (a) (13335) 8.30 Johnson and Friends (a) (a) (104558)

8.40 The Record (519087)
8.05 Daytime on Two. Educational programmes. Plus, for children, 10.00-10.25 Playdays (5255852)

2.00 Johnson and Friends (a) (3636784) 2.10 Open View (10739055)

2.15 Sport on Friday. The World Indoor Bowls Championship and the World Snooker Championship (23248) 3.55 News (Cesfax) and weather (185887)

4.00 Today's the Day. History quiz (a) (500) 4.30 World Indoor Bowls (13718)

4.40 The Muppet Show (a) (447236)
4.55 The New Avengers. Obsession. After joining Steed in a security team guarding a delegation of important Arabs, Purdy is distracted by the arrival of an old friend (Cesfax) (a) (58674)

7.15 Electric Circus. Entertainment magazine (a) (797504)

7.30 Sound of the Eighties. This week's musical memories are supplied by, among others, ZZ Top, U2 and Bruce Springsteen (Cesfax) (a) (413) 11.25 7.30pm-8.00pm

8.00 Top Gear. Motorsport. Tony Mason reports on the 1996 Dealer Rally (Cesfax) (a) (8351)

8.30 Gardeners' World. Geoff Hamilton and the team return with gardening advice (Cesfax) (a) (2158)

9.00 The Fast Show. New seven-part comedy sketch show with Paul Whitehouse (Cesfax) (a) (3528)

9.30 Red Dwarf: VI Science-fiction comedy (a) (Cesfax) (a) (3142)

10.00 Film of the Week. A second series of the comedy show starring Stewart Lee, Richard Herring, Peter Baynham and Kevin Eldon (a) (17351)

10.30 Newsnight (Cesfax) (515177)

11.15 Fantasy Football League. David Baddiel and Frank Skinner are joined by Neil Montague and Alan Davies (a) (586235) 11.15 Wales 2006 — the Culture (586448) 11.55 Fantasy Football League (759968) 12.00am Seinfeld (5053017) 12.05 The Small of Reeves and Mortimer (7576385) 1.20am The Small of Reeves and Mortimer (7576385) 1.20am The Small of Reeves and Mortimer (7576385) 1.20am The Small of Reeves and Mortimer (7576385)

1.45 The Small of Reeves and Mortimer. Vic and Bob, their cottage cheese and vodka, and their own Stars in Their Eyes (Cesfax) (a) (58210)

12.15am Weather (755611)

12.20-1.25 World Indoor Bowls (8303458)

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CHOICE

Gardeners' World (BBC2, 8.30pm)
Many thousands of people visit Vita Jackville-West's Sissinghurst each year but this superb Kent garden has been curiously neglected by the small screen. Guy Searcher, presenter of quiet authority, makes amends with a location report. She looks back on the creation of the garden during the 1930s and tells us how Jackville-West's head gardener, about maintaining Sissinghurst's legacy in the face of the huge annual invasion from Britain and abroad. After that Nick Wray's attempt to interest us in a garden in suburban Croydon may seem like an anti-climax, though it offers a spectacular display, bringing together this first in the new series of Gardeners' World is the evocative Geoff Hamilton. The middle of February may not be prime time for jobs in the garden, but trust Geoff to find some.

The Fast Show (BBC2, 9.00pm)
Fast, this comedy sketch series certainly is, since no item is on the screen long enough to be fully appreciated. It's a bit more than one-liners. But there is wit as well as speed. Apart from a gag about a school called The Unpronounceables, the show echoes the relatively easy option of sending up other people's material and rolls its own. The humour essentially derives from gulling a range of familiar types. Those who wish to see the series will welcome the return of the teenage mum, Ron the rambling football manager and Alf the accident-prone pensioner. But there are many new characters this time. Paul Whitehouse and Charlie Hoggins dominate the credits, as performers, writers and producers, but Mrs Merton falls hard on the comedy, posing the various guises of Caroline Hogg.

Catherine Cookson's The Girl (ITV, 9.00pm)
Hannah played by a promising young actress, Siobhan Flynn, is the archetypal Catherine Cookson heroine, born out of wedlock and abandoned by her father, abused and ostracised as a child and forced into a miserable marriage. A three-parter by an experienced Cookson adapter, Gordon Hobb, the tale is set in Northumberland in the middle of the 19th century. It is both about the imposition of strict Victorian morality and departs from it. Either way, women such as Hannah are the victims. Perhaps that is why Cookson, despite setting her stories in the past, has such a modern ring. Television has again done justice to a writer who combines the full blood of melodrama with cunning narrative skill.

Roseanne: The Fifteen Show (Channel 4, 10.00pm)
To take a long established sitcom and relocate it, even for one episode, in the 1950s requires wit as well as courage. The makers of Roseanne fortunately have both in large measure. The result, shot in appropriate black and white, is a brilliant pastiche of those anonymous middle-class comedies, set in spottish homes where dutiful wives attend to mollycoddled husbands and teenage rebellion meant no more than trying to stay out later than 10 o'clock at night. The abusive, wife-cracking Roseanne of the 1990s is transformed here into the 1950s little woman, resigned to a life of cooking and cleaning and never caught without a smile and a patty. Besides parodying the television comedies of the era the show also sends up its commercials with precision. It even veers into a bit about a

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HTV

8.00am GMTV (258516)
9.25 Win, Lose or Draw (a) (3978413)
9.55 London Today (Teletext) (5345429)
10.00 The Time...the Place (a) (1596448)
10.35 This Morning (15374055)
12.20pm Regional News (Teletext) (8857887)
12.30 News and weather (Teletext) (3191622)
12.55 Murder, She Wrote (a) (8276522)
2.00 Home and Away (Teletext) (a) (5769142)

2.25 Chain Letters (Teletext) (a) (5774117)
2.50 The Good Health Guide (3465500)
3.20 News headlines (Teletext) (2875719)
3.25 Regional News (Teletext) (2887790)

4.00 Real and True (a) (1248518) 4.45 Zzzap! (1163871) 4.00 The Sylvester and Tweety Mysteries (185790) 4.25 Gladiators: Train to Win (Teletext) (1866177) 4.55 Get This (a) (1706413)

5.10 A Country Practice (a) (8299158)
5.40 News and weather (Teletext) (587871)
6.00 Home and Away. Kelly's sister accuses her of letting her boyfriend die (a) (Teletext) (a) (530983)

6.25 RTV News (Teletext) (537326)
6.45 Sportsworld (Teletext) (400868)
6.50 Bruce Forsyth's Play Your Cards Right. Couples test their knowledge of public opinion in the hope of winning a car and cash (Teletext) (a) (1429)

7.30 Coronation Street. Alma is the latest of the street (Teletext) (259)
8.00 The Bill. When Brownlow sets uniform against CID, Beach nearly gets caught in the crossfire (Teletext) (1187)

8.30 Paul Martin in Galton and Simpson's... Sealed with a Loving Kiss. Two people meet for the first time after parting by letter, but will their expectations live up to the reality? And, if not, will they be honest about their feelings? (Teletext) (a) (5784)

8.50 Catherine Cookson's The Girl (Teletext) (a) (1117)

10.00 News at Ten and weather (Teletext) (1117)

10.30 Regional News and Weather (727681)
10.40 Entertaining Mr Wedlock (337448)
11.10 Kojak (434429)

12.30 Hotel Babylon (a) (3389088)
1.10 The Good Sex Guide... Late (a) (844104)

2.10 Film: Nightwalk (1989) starring Robert Urich, Lesley-Anne Down and Mark Joy. A detective investigating a murder on a coastal walk in the 1950s. A woman becomes the next target of a professional hit man. Directed by Jerold Freedman (220475)

3.50 Live from London (a) (a) (9437098)
5.30 On the Live Side (61122)
5.30 Morning News (52921)

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The angry mothers of women's lib are growing old gracefully, says Joe Joseph



March of time: the people who smirked at Germaine Greer, left, and Gloria Steinem when they were young now smother the older versions with praise, and no one refers to Joan Bakewell as the "thinking man's crumpet" any more

Feminism: why age does matter

Arriving soon is an admiring, moist-eyed biography, *Gloria Steinem: The Education of a Woman* by Carolyn Heilbrun, a professor of humanities at New York's Columbia University. Julie Andrews says if she weren't herself, then she'd like to be Steinem.

Men have always found it tricky to know how to treat young, pretty feminists. This is because men are biologically different from women, in that they possess the special Y-chromosome. This is what gives men their unique manly attributes, such as the inability

to do their own laundry, and a firm belief that all committed young feminists should really look like Andrea Dworkin.

The way men see it, if a 20-year-old, mini-skirted Gloria Steinem or Germaine Greer threatens to jump down your throat, it's almost a form of foreplay. If Andrea Dworkin does it, you sit down and listen to what she has to say.

But suddenly people who smirked at the young Steinem and Greer, now smother the old versions with praise. *The New York Times* calls Steinem "one of the best dates to take to a party". Is this the same Gloria Steinem who was once

ridiculed by Middle America for championing the Black Panthers and the California fruit-pickers? The Gloria Steinem who had the world guffawing in the aisles when she suggested that "the architecture of Catholic churches mimics the female body; the outer portals serve as the labia majora, the inner portals as labia minora, the side altars as ovaries, and the high altar the uterus at the heart of the swelling dome that holds the body of the faithful?" The same Steinem who teased and baited the male establishment with essays such as *If Men Could Menstruate* ("If men

could menstruate, they would brag about how often and how much"? Yup. A few weeks ago, an organisation called the Veteran Feminists of America even gathered to pay tribute to 64-year-old Steinem, who became the midwife of mass-market feminism when she founded the magazine *Ms* in 1972. Speaker after speaker hailed her as brilliant, strong, constant, funny... the praise was so gushing that even Steinem stammered: "I keep wondering if I'm dead yet."

The other angry mothers of the movement have also now edged into the Establishment.

Look at Shere Hite—who 20 years ago gave us *The Hite Report*, a then brazen book of sexual confessions that people found hair-raising or reassuring, depending on their own sexual proclivities—was being fêted in Oxford not as a porn peddler but as a preacher for human rights. Delivering the Amnesty Lecture at the Sheldonian Theatre, she decried religious fundamentalism which, she argued, opposes the secular Western tradition of tolerance.

Groucho Marx used to joke that he knew Doris Day before she was a virgin. Does anyone remember Germaine Greer before she was a grannyish, grey-haired elder stateswoman who now appears on telly not so that chat show hosts can wink at the camera and giggle at what they regard

as her juvenile unworldliness, but to share her views on the naïveté of young, feisty women who want it all?

Those with long memories seem to recall a sex-filler put out by Granada television in the late 1960s which featured a flirtatious, raucous young lecturer in English from Warwick University called Germaine Greer, who wore teeny skirts, a frizzy perm, had the word "Golly" plastered across her chest and spouted lines such as: "It takes a fairly hefty breeze to blow my skirts above my knees! But it takes a hurricane, once up, to blow them down again."

So, naturally, many people were jolted when Greer turned on *Countryfile*, columnist Suzanne Moore last year and ridiculed "her" for sporting "bird's nest hair", fatty slugs baring "three fat inches of cleavage" and for being a "feminist of the younger

school", a "pouting pundit". "So much lipstick," said Greer, "must rot the brain." So much for cheap and cheerful greasypaint then.

But the thing is that now that Greer has grey hair and spreading hips, the world looks at her—a woman who

Don't paint yourself like a Dulux colour chart, she advises, or you'll just look like a hussy. And maybe Shaw was right when he said youth was wasted on the young.

Greer sees the younger generation of feminists as a bit of a disappointment. So those who

turned 70, Friedan, author of *The Feminine Mystique* and widely regarded as mother of the American women's movement, worries more about the problems of old age than the problems of women. In her book *The Second Stage*, Friedan attacked "the feminist mystique" and accused feminists of ignoring the central role of the family.

In Britain, Rosie Boycott, one of the founders of the now defunct *Spare Rib*, has also strolled into the Establishment fold, successfully editing the UK edition of *Esquire* and occasionally joining the Monday morning chatter of Radio 4's *Start the Week*. And guess what, the only place you'll find Joan Bakewell—still the same clever TV broadcaster she has always been—referred to as "the thinking man's crumpet" nowadays is in yellowing newspaper clippings. Tell that to young kids today, and they just won't believe you.



Greer, left, Steinem and Bakewell during their bra-burning days

teaches a little, writes a little, tends her farmyard animals a little—and they set a fount of wise-old-woman wisdom.

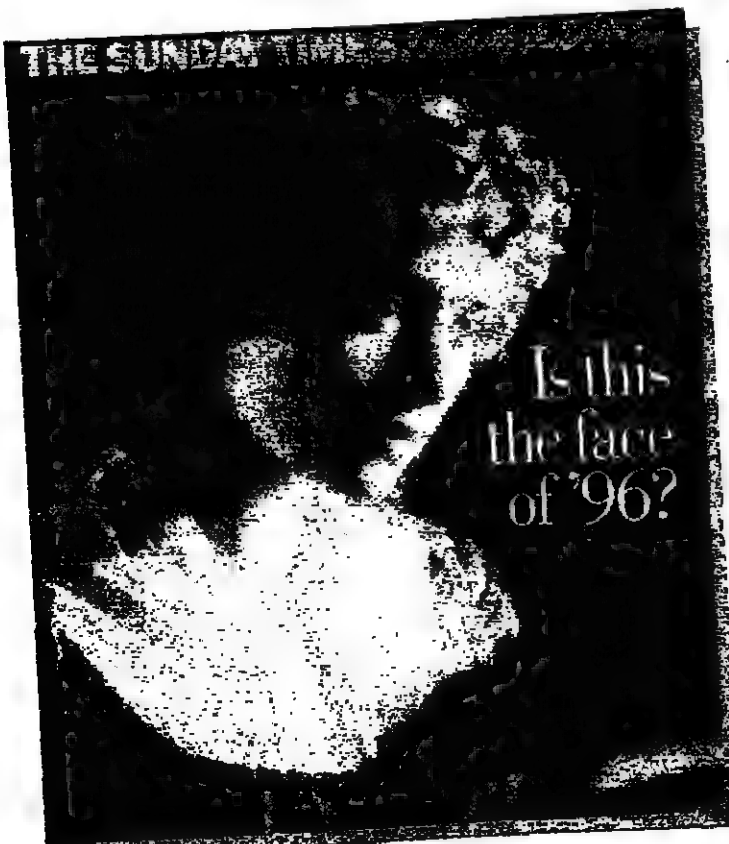
Don't rail against the menopause, says Greer, relish it as a liberation from the unsatisfactory hurly-burly of sex.

also find them a running bunch of harpies (as they did Greer and Steinem 30 years ago), find themselves nodding sympathetically with Greer, almost, as it were, by default. It's the same with Betty Friedan. Now that she has

same clever TV broadcaster she has always been—referred to as "the thinking man's crumpet" nowadays is in yellowing newspaper clippings. Tell that to young kids today, and they just won't believe you.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

The world now sees Greer as a fount of old-woman wisdom

as her juvenile unworldliness, but to share her views on the naïveté of young, feisty women who want it all.

Those with long memories seem to recall a sex-filler put out by Granada television in the late 1960s which featured a flirtatious, raucous young lecturer in English from Warwick University called Germaine Greer, who wore teeny skirts, a frizzy perm, had the word "Golly" plastered across her chest and spouted lines such as: "It takes a fairly hefty breeze to blow my skirts above my knees! But it takes a hurricane, once up, to blow them down again."

In her book, *The Female Eunuch*, this young iconoclast wrote: "As far as cosmetics are used for adornment in a conscious and creative way, they are not emblems of inauthenticity, use cosmetics chiefly for fun... the cheapest and some of the best fun are the colours used on the stage in greasypaint."

So, naturally, many people were jolted when Greer turned on *Countryfile*, columnist Suzanne Moore last year and ridiculed "her" for sporting "bird's nest hair", fatty slugs baring "three fat inches of cleavage" and for being a "feminist of the younger



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How the Marchioness of Worcester became the champion of the Newbury protesters

I don't want gifts. I want to change the world

Titled ladies who espouse good causes are hardly a novelty but there is something seriously driven and determined about the Marchioness of Worcester, the erstwhile actress Tracy Ward. Tracy Worcester, as she is known in the Green world, last weekend led a walk along the proposed route of the Newbury bypass.

Her new baby, Xan, sleeps in his pram on the doorstep. It is a long time since I have seen a London child left outside in a pram. And it is the perilous world that Lord Alexander Somerset will inherit that so exercises Tracy.

Her house, The Cottage — on the edge of the Gloucestershire park of Badminton House, home to the annual horse trials — is a large dowerhouse in mellow stone. It is wonderfully chaotic. This is a house where children come first, and time is not wasted on unnecessary energy-consuming laundering. Tracy's boots are scuffed, her face devoid of artifice. Her car is an aged BMW filled with childish debris — tapes, cans, wrappers.

Outside the sky was blue, so Tracy put on a woollen cap and an Afghan jacket inherited from her mother-in-law (the late Duchess of Beaufort) and led me via maze-like box hedges to a grassy sward. We carried a wooden bench from the poolside. The pool was frozen, but Lady Isabella, aged five, had just broken the ice and had a swim. (The eldest child, Bobby, Earl of Glamorgan, aged seven, was at his day-school.)

Tracy is lucky, as she says. At 37, she does not have to work; she does not have to commute along pollution-clogged roads like the noble folk who toil at Friends of the Earth (FoE) headquarters. So she invites them for weekend seminars here — "I can't think how they survive in the busiest part of London: people who work for the environment should be able to get out into the environment."

I have just walked through pedestrianised Chippenham, with its empty shops. This is what happens, Tracy says, when people build bypasses

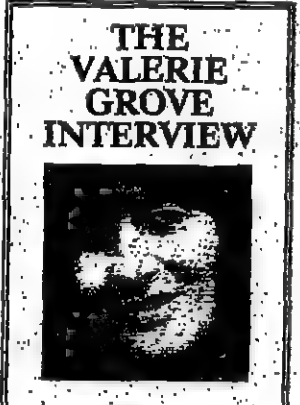
and, out-of-town hypermarkets. "It's killed the shops, the high street. The centre is dead. But which political party is challenging it? They are all on the global treadmill."

I went to Mongolia recently and the people in the aeroplane were all businessmen getting Mongolians to make cheap shirts for Americans. Every company is forced now to comb the globe for cheaper labour, so small businesses die and big ones grow. The Third World is persuaded to want Barbie dolls and Nike shoes, their identity rocked by the persuasive insistence of our

to invite nobody would come if it was just me." Guests have included William Waldegrave, Sir Jonathan Porritt, Brian Mawhinney and Sir Terence Burns. "I don't speak myself. I get the people who can articulate best about how the world has gone wrong." She began to tell me what Gillian Shepherd had said, until she remembered that "Chatham House rules" operate.

"What I've discovered is that politicians are part of this global process, signing away their powers to unelected bureaucrats in the interests of the World Bank or the OECD. If you challenge them on the farming system — wouldn't it be better if we produced nutritious food locally? — they say sorry, my hands are tied by Europe. We tried to stop tuna being caught in nets dangerous to dolphins. Can't do that, it's GATT-illegal." They admit to being suffocated by global trade agreements.

They are powerless: power is in the hands of money and trade; they are in thrall to the economic system. I once asked a Texan oil man, Syd Bass, why don't you look at alternative energy systems? He said the competition is so overpowering that they can only think of getting their produce sold as cheaply and as massively as the competitor.



THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW

mono-culture, pushed by the multinationals.

It all seems a million miles from this pastoral idyll, loud with birdsong. The roads of car-free Badminton are safe. Tracy can raise her children — so far — without computer games, television or junk food. Tracy was brought up in the village of Cornwell in Oxfordshire, whose only shop is now closed. Why, she wants to know, are the sandwiches sold in their local Boots made in Essex? "Nobody questions it. Why does it have to be like this? Why are 12,000 farmers and farm labourers leaving the land every year?"

She harangues everyone like this, at every opportunity. The other night she found herself sitting next to Henry Kissinger at dinner. "Tracy, I agree with every word you say," he solemnly told her.

In London she is famous for her tributes to dinners with Sir Crispin Tickell as co-host. "He gives me carte blanche on who

Her husband the Marquess, the Duke of Beaufort's heir, whom she married in 1987, does not take part in her eco-gatherings. She calls him Harry, not his nickname, Bunter. "I think he's called that because he's quite clumsy. If you're off him, things do fly. But he's ravishing, kind and generous."

When Xan was born (at 11lb, in an NHS hospital in Bristol) she donated the £2,000 saved on medical fees to the Metropolitan Transport Research Unit. "And Harry gave me a whacking cheque for the environment movement. He knows I don't want jewellery, I don't want gifts. I want to change the world. I think we've got to, if we're going to have a future. I think the planet will be laughing. It will survive but we won't if we



The Marchioness of Worcester with Bella and Xan: "We've got to change if we're going to have a future." Photograph by Peter Nicholls

drag the world into the next century without any social responsibility. We've got to change; we can't rely on governments to do it."

The former star of the television series *Cats' Eyes*, and sister of the actress Rachel Ward, dreads being offered an irresistible role again.

"I only care about my family, my children, the quality of the air they breathe, places to walk in peace and tranquillity. If we make our lives unpleasant, is that progress?"

"Everybody cares about these things, but most people are too busy in their jobs to act. It takes time to unravel the lies and rhetoric and to try to change the state we're in. You can't save an elephant, you have to save an eco-system. So I decided to throw my lot in with Friends of the Earth. The people there have a vision so pure and so right."

Her first FoE project was the Rainforest Ball at the Hippodrome in 1988. Her name helped to sell too many tickets. "So embarrassing," she says. "Seven months organising and it was bedlam. But we did raise £125,000."

Last year she joined Bel Mooney in her Bath-easton bypass protest. "People would say: 'I know we need these 44-ton lorries.' We don't need these lorries or this Euro-route subsidising mass production from all over the world."

And if everyone in Newbury could see the bigger picture they would be united. The message is: stop building roads, they only attract more traffic. There is a cheaper and more beneficial way than spending £101 million."

Tonight she hosts a dinner for 20 guests from the Soil Association and Compassion in World Farming, plus the local vicar. She will give them venison — she will serve meat if the animals "have had a happy life and are nutritious, not pumped with chemicals" — and organic vegetables. On the agenda: why local quangos subsidise huge multinationals just to soak up a few of the unemployed in Bristol.

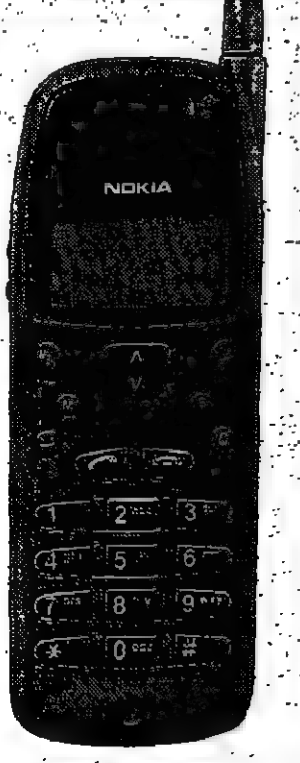
It was time to breastfeed Xan. Bella and friends raced round the table in witches' hats. Tracy, impervious to the commotion, said: "What I've learnt is that small is beautiful, but small has no power. We have to unite, to fight the globalisation that disempowers us and undermines democracy. That is why I am a networker. And a mother."

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Philip Howard



There's a managerial row in the Close tonight, and all of Barchester cowers

What is this, bishop, about your stipend?" said Mrs Proudie, coming to the end of the table and standing there. Obadiah Slope did not permit the bishop to answer, but replied himself. "I have proposed a motion at the General Synod, ma'am, to abolish stipend differentials. In this day and age of Our Lord it is obscene for a bishop, even for the Bishop of Barchester, to earn twenty times as much as the curate of Plumstead Parva. Perhaps I ought not to interfere, but yet —"

"Certainly you ought not, sir," cried the infuriated dame. "And why should you so categorise my lord's emoluments as obscene? What Socinian and Erastian cant is that?"

"That is the language of Church-management-speak, marm, replied the slippery Slope, with a sanctified smirk, and he of the Church are going to network with and be a partner-in-change with other parts of society then we must learn to speak their language of management and share our own theological jargon. Jargon after all is merely a way of e-mailing grid references for concepts. Just as the teachers in our Barchester schools now spend more time in self-appraisal and appraising each other's self-appraisals than they do in front of their blackboards, so we men of the cloth must find a developmental facilitative approach. We need to maximise the potential of our human resources to empower the lesser clergy by assigning them areas of decision-making. This may necessitate an element of team-performance bonuses for the Cathedral Close Centre. And that must entail stipendiary equalisation."

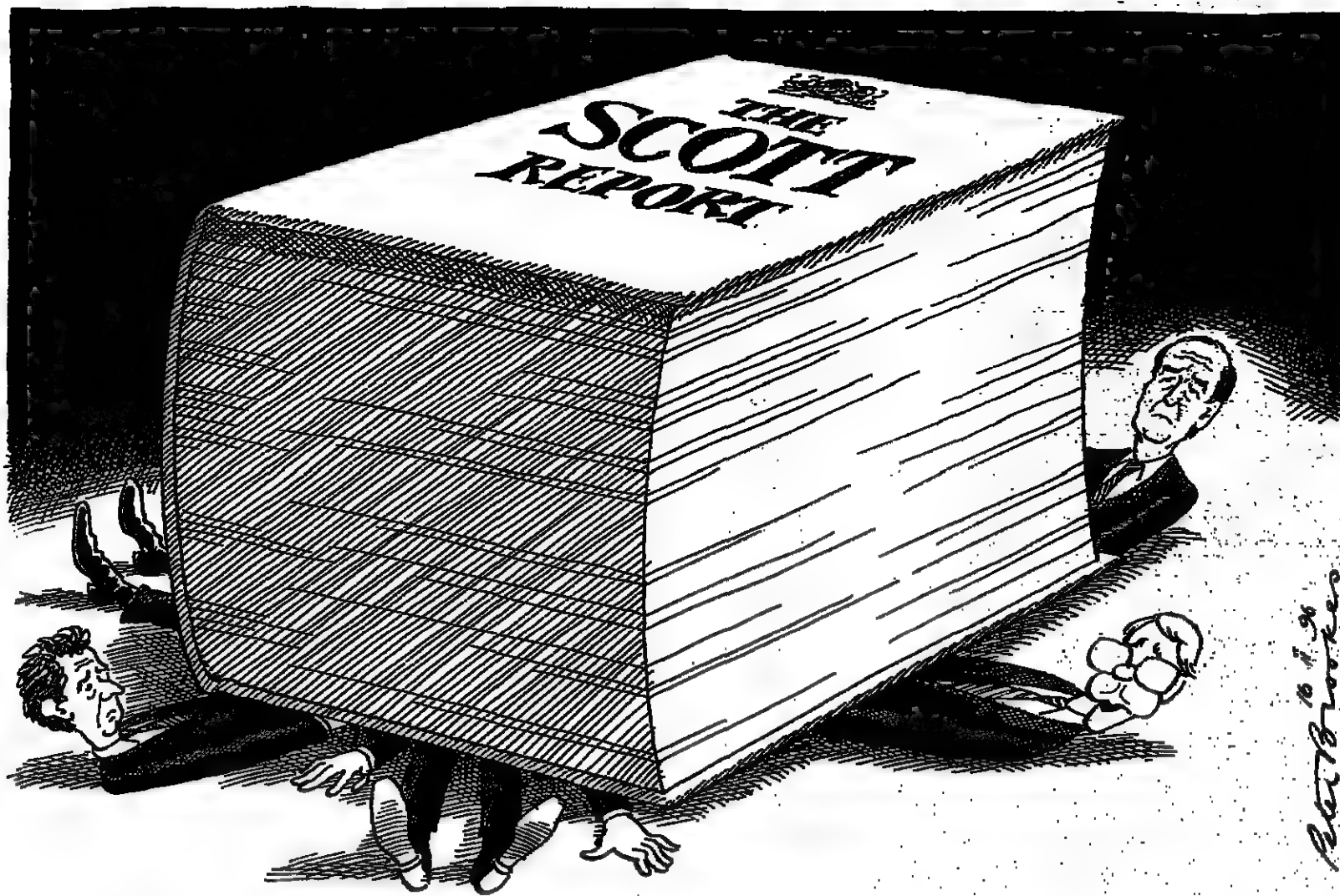
"I am not sure I quite follow that," interposed Dr Proudie, scratching his head. "It is perfectly simple, my lord," said Mr Slope. "Our brethren in the Southwold Diocese have pioneered the use of Total Quality Management (TQM) for the Church. In simplistic days, our mission statement was called the Holy Gospel, but now in Barchester we must draft a new one to articulate our core values and long- and short-term goals, and identify developmental needs. Similarly we need to service our stakeholders. This is what unenlightened clergy designate as ministering to their flocks. But today the language of computers is more familiar than the dialect of shepherding, even in Barchester. With teamwork and focus we can blueprint a diocese in tune with tomorrow's imperatives."

Mrs Proudie was boiling over with wrath. "My lord," said she, "am I to be vouchsafed an answer about the stipend or am I not?"

Again Mr Slope responded on behalf of his bishop. "My lord," he said, "it is arguable that chief execs such as yourself merit a particular emolument package in view of the high-risk, high-turnover nature of your work. No doubt some modifications can be made in your pension arrangements, as the new management jargon describes what used to be called Providence. I will have a word with the Human Resources Manager." "Impertinence close to blasphemy," exclaimed Mrs Proudie.

"My lord," said Mr Slope, "severe critics have always supposed that the Church of England was run by a bunch of old women. Now that statistical research shows that most of our learning people and many of our non-essential front-line services managers are female, and there are even priestesses, we must ensure that we do not preach ourselves into a zero-sum scenario. You must not broadcast the sound-bite to the common media that in the cathedral close a lady wears the episcopal robe."

Without further parley, Mrs Proudie left the palace withdrawing-room, and did not forget to shut the door with resolute emphasis after her. There was no mincing of matters now. There followed a close conference between the bishop and his chaplain over the quality-control management (as Mr Slope called holiness) that was needed to keep the Church in a win-win situation. The primary task and concurrent engineering were to be found in the alternative manual that had replaced the prayer book. Without this new managerial modernisation, Mr Slope impressed upon his quaking bishop that the Church was at risk of self-destruction (the new phrase for sin), and Barchester pious in a high-risk profile of bankruptcy (being damned).



"Once you've put it down, you can't pick it up."

Mountain over molehill

Sir Richard Scott laboured long, but the grotesque result fails to address the real questions of government

When King Kong loomed over the Manhattan skyline, the citizens behaved like demented ants. Men dived into cars and crashed into lamp-posts. Policemen screamed and waved their arms. Beautiful girls tore their underwear. The monster smiled at them all and wrecked the Empire State Building.

Thus Downing Street in advance of yesterday's Scott report. This entire fiasco was almost vindicated by the handling of its climax. A Government pleading respect for Parliament insulted Parliament. Ministers desperate to wrongfoot their opponents handed them a gift on a plate. A Whitehall machine eager to dismiss the Scott inquiry as so much judicial self-abuse made it seem a noble crusade against men with something nasty to hide. As for the excuse that every government conceals reports until it can rebut them, that is hokum.

Why the fuss? Sir Richard Scott let them all off the hook, albeit a hook of *papier mâché*. He was asked to answer two modest questions put to him in 1992 by the Prime Minister. One was about the status of government documents in criminal trials. The other was about the disclosure to Parliament of changes in arms trade policy. Both had caused ministers some embarrassment and arose from that bugbear of all governments, espionage. All Whitehall's great traumas, from Vassall and Blunt to Franks and Spycatcher, have arisen from the antics of spies. It is a wonder nobody thinks to abolish them.

For some reason Sir Richard was seized by pretensions to grandeur. He set out to build a mountain over a molehill. He abandoned all sense of proportion and adopted the ruin of a self-confessed "naïve" outsider. Theatrical public hearings were staged at which he and his assistant, Presley Baxendale, mimicked American courtroom dramas. They treated the highest in the land like defendants in a criminal trial. With the luxury of unlimited time and the right to summon paper they roamed free over such arcane concepts as ministerial responsibility, Civil Service loyalty, judicial discretion and official secrecy. They hinted at deep constitutional thoughts and duly became the despair of Whitehall and darlings of the media and even the London stage.

The molehill remains a molehill. After the bellyache of his "trial of ministers" and his leaked draft report, Sir Richard

found himself backtracking on his wilder initial allegations. He is not a malicious man. Section D of his report indicates a clear misleading of Parliament about the nuances of non-lethal arms exports to Iraq, but it accepts that there was no bending of the formal arms policy. His conclusion rightly asserts that where a measure of secrecy is required by policy and where ministers are relying on official advice, there is an obligation to be as frank as possible. (Ian Lang's summary of these passages yesterday was woefully partial.) Yet Sir Richard detects no insincerity, no conspiracy to mislead and no hanging

goal. Paul Henderson, a man whose business activities might have earned him the exhortation of Mr Robertson and *The Guardian*, emerged from their embrace a "brave M16 agent" (which he was not) and an idol of the Left. Indeed one of the many warped consequences of Sir Richard's *modus operandi* was to make public heroes of the two individuals most culpable in this silly affair: Mr Henderson and the former minister, Alan Clark. They have given new meaning to "Scott free". Those who had to mope up after them were cast as knaves (not least in the BBC's biased dramatisation).

So much for the molehills. What of Sir Richard's mountain, a veritable Ste-Victoire in its range and colouring, and in its creator's ambition? What justified three years work, three years of turmoil, publicity and anguish? Reading Scott I had an eerie sense that he had

been passed a dummy. I would have welcomed his views on substantive matters such as the ethics of the arms trade, the efficacy of the House of Commons or the future of judicial review. Instead we have five volumes almost entirely filled with historical material on arms deals, parliamentary exchanges and commercial case law. There can be nothing left to learn of the nuances and compromises of "grey area" machine tools licensing. But after 2,000 pages and a broad exhortation, we are hardly the wiser. It is as well Sir Richard was not directed at the Pergau dam scandal. There real clashes of trade and foreign policy were at stake, and ministers were unquestionably culpable of deception. Pergau remains the one that got away.

The Scott report ends with a dying fall. It illustrates what practitioners of government know well, that there is a difficult calling. Wrangling ministers and officials are not inept schemers seeking to evade Sir Richard's stern reprimand. They represent real interests

in real contention. Their accountability to Parliament, as to the press and the law, is foggy, since — especially in foreign affairs — there has to be a premium on confidentiality. Their chief enemy is time. Expecting them to cover all their traces against a Scott inquiry is like expecting Sir Richard himself having to give his report in two weeks flat, with no mistakes and subject to public scrutiny of his every move. I imagine he would not like that.

Unlike the law, government takes place in real time. Lord Franks, reporting on the intelligence failures prior to the Falklands invasion, did so quickly and incisively in one short volume. Sir Richard's raw material was paltry, a few fudged parliamentary answers, the fabled conviction of three arms dealers and some ministerial red faces. He should have spent six weeks on the job, and gone back to his courtroom. I disagree with Lord Howe when he says the Scott technique was unjust. Politicians sometimes deserve a rougher ride than the stagey banter of Parliament. But the report's lack of proportion and dilatoriness was grotesque.

The test of an exercise in hindsight is whether those involved would, in retrospect, have behaved differently. The thinness of Sir Richard's recommendations suggests not: There will always be a tension between sensitive policy changes and their public presentation. Ministers will always seek to shield their disagreements from the public. Water will always flow downhill. The report leaves the PII procedure (with some technical reforms) in place. It accepts commercial and security confidentiality. It agrees that ministerial responsibility is diluted by the complexity of government. The mountain reduces to eight final pages, wishing that ministers be more forthcoming with information. The coda is a pious wish that politicians might behave less like politicians.

This inquiry was begun after an executive, not a legal, failure. MPs' Question Time and letters are not adequate properly to scrutinise modern government. Parliament hired an outside inquisitor to do this job for it, rather than delegate it to a select committee (as Congress would have done). This is a poor comment on Parliament. I read to the end of the report for advice on how better to order these things in future. I read in vain.

Simon Jenkins

Scott ho!

MAKING GOOD his escape from Whitehall, Sir Richard Scott departs this morning for a week's hunting in Ireland. His passion for the chase is undiminished — in fact, he insisted on being allowed to continue the dangerous sport before agreeing to take on the inquiry.

His insistence was a risky proposition. Sir Richard is one of the more fearless members of the Mid-Surrey Farmers' Drags-

hounds, and a fall would have jeopardised the report. Riders of average ability would end up in hospital — or worse — if they attempted what Sir Richard takes on in the saddle. In this week's *Horse and Hound*, the High Court judge Sir Edward Cazalet writes an ode to his ability and lauds the stylish manner in which Scott cleared Pug's Hole — a brute of a fence at Burwash more challenging than Becher's Brook at Aintree.



Scott in the saddle: a jump ahead of the pack

As His Lordship sits in judgment And construes an ancient scroll, The Litigants all whisper, "That's the Judge who sat Pug's Hole."

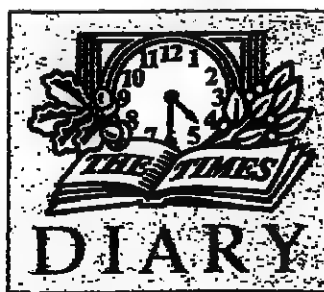
While the likes of William Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas Lyell may curse Sir Richard, the secretary of the Masters of Draghounds, Brian Stern, can only praise the man: "A rider who can jump these kinds of hedges is extremely rare. You have to be extremely brave. Some would consider such feats as reckless, mad even."

Keen young lefties are being invited to apply for a research/campaigner job in the classified ads of the New Statesman. The brief is to work for Michael Meacher MP researching "job insecurity". The position is available for just one year.

Bagman

ROBIN COOK, the Shadow Foreign Secretary who had to lead the assault on the Government over the Scott report after some frenetic speed-reading, had had some practice at impromptu reactions recently at Labour's Europe conference.

Not only was his train delayed so that he arrived in Birmingham hours late, but the bag containing



the speech he was to make was stolen on the journey. Despite the odds, Cook made it to the conference platform before the end of the day's session, and did his bit without anyone noticing anything amiss.

Powell-axed

CARLA POWELL, hot-blooded wife of Baroness Thatcher's former private secretary Sir Charles, has brought Lord Wyatt's dizzy daughter Petronella to book over the Italian male.

Responding to Pesty's extraordinary piece in last week's *Spectator* claiming that Italian chaps didn't measure up to much, she dashed off a furious letter in support of her countrymen.

"Men for men, the Italian male has out-scored his English counterpart throughout history," she

writes. "Machiavelli v Burke? Leonardo v Turner? Palladio v Adam? Casanova v — well who is your choice, Petronella?"

Ivy league

THERE are worse places to be holed up than in a well-known restaurant during a bomb scare. Yesterday, well-heeled lunchers who had taken refuge from the tedium of the Scott recriminations at the Ivy found themselves incarcerated.

Neither entry nor egress was possible as police investigated the problem. Peter Lilley was turned away, while Clive Anderson and Josephine Hart were locked inside. There was compensation though when, in despair at the frustration of diners, the restaurant offered free champagne all round.

Quite unfit

KEEP-FIT NEWS: the singer Cher, hurtling towards her 50th birthday, is said to be stepping out with Matt Dillon, a twenty-something actor still working his way through his first packet of razor blades.

Some might consider this reported union a marvel of biology, a welcome triumph over the forces



"I'm having an arms crisis"

of gravity. Not Cindy Adams of the *New York Post*. Admitting to jealousy, she commented yesterday: "I mean, Cher has garter-belts older than this guy."

A brace of traffic policemen with the Lothian and Borders force was out on the moors the other day, trapping speeding motorists with a radar gun. Suddenly the gun jammed — permanently — after registering a speed of more than 300 miles per hour. Seconds later a low-flying Harrier jet screamed overhead.

P.H.S.

A blind eye to blame

Peter Riddell

thinks the Tories will survive — just

The Scott report is highly damaging for the Government, but will probably not be fatal for either William Waldegrave or Sir Nicholas Lyell. Probably, because yesterday was an occasion for propaganda, not considered judgment. It was like a Budget — a theatrical event when there is too much material to absorb at once, so immediate impressions are often misleading.

The Government case was robust but only partially convincing. The more time people had to read the report, the more partial the version presented by Ian Lang looked. He and other ministers sought to claim victory before the debate had started by defining it in very narrow terms. There were two strands: one that everyone acted honourably and, second, that the whole affair had been got up malevolently by the Opposition, which ought to apologise. This was to maintain party unity and rouse the more gullible Tory backbenchers to fury against Robin Cook, their favourite bogey. But it is partisan hogwash.

The more effective Government defence is that while mistakes were made, Mr Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas, and other ministers and officials, acted in good faith. Sir Richard Scott accepted this at his news conference. The report says that Mr Waldegrave did not have "any duplicitous intention" and did not intend his letters to MPs to be "misleading", though it is highly critical of his actions over export guidelines. This approach is similar to the verdict reached by Lord Franks's report into the events leading up to the Argentine invasion of the Falklands — that despite serious intelligence failings, the Government could not be blamed. As 13 years ago, this allows the Government to argue that everyone acted "honestly and with propriety", and there was no conspiracy to send innocent people to jail. That should be enough to protect Mr Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas. The Prime Minister last night committed himself strongly to the two ministers, and it would be a serious personal defeat if they were now forced to resign.

But that is not the end of the story. Behaving honestly and with propriety may be enough to remain in office, but it does not ever remotely answer the report's criticisms of ministers and officials. Mr Lang yesterday engaged in cherry-picking of the most favourable paragraphs and even sentences.

Even a cursory dip into the five volumes shows that while ministers may have acted in good faith, they and their officials behaved at the least incompetently — and in many cases worse. For instance, the report concludes in volume one that guidelines on export sales "did not remain unchanged"; that the failure to inform Parliament was "deliberate"; and that intelligence information that machine tools from Matrix Churchill went to the Iraqi arms programme was "so strong" that for ministers to maintain that they were possibly for civilian use was equivalent to the Nelsonian use of a blind eye. The report also denounces the Government's handling of the prosecution in the Matrix Churchill case and the signing of public interest immunity certificates, but these conclusions were brushed aside by the Government as not being in accordance with the accepted view of the law.

The Government has a case to answer which goes well beyond the personal honour of Mr Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas. The report raises serious questions about whether the Government complied with its procedural rulebook. Questions of Procedure for Ministers (QPM). Sir Richard concludes on page 507 of the first volume that "the Government's statements made in 1989 and 1990 about policy on defence exports to Iraq consistently failed to comply with the standards set out in QPM and, more important, failed to discharge the obligations imposed by the constitutional principle of ministerial accountability."

These are not trivial matters. Even if the good faith of ministers is accepted, these issues cannot be dismissed as being of interest only to conspiracy theorists. They go to the heart of ministers' relations with Parliament, as Sir Richard discusses in a fascinating chapter on ministerial accountability at the end of volume four, which is likely to become an essential text for constitutional theorists. Sir Richard argues that if, as the Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robin Butler, maintains, "ministers are to be excused blame and personal criticism on the basis of the absence of personal knowledge or involvement, the corollary ought to be an acceptance of the obligation to be forthcoming with information to Parliament". This is central to the failings which the Scott report has identified.

The political impact of the report will depend not just on whether Mr Waldegrave and Sir Nicholas face fresh challenges over the next week, but also on how far the general impression of devious behaviour sticks. The key will be whether senior Tory MPs, beyond known critics like Richard Shepherd, break ranks, and on the extent of media criticism. If the Tories remain united, the two ministers should remain safe. The Government should be helped by the upturn in the morale of Tory MPs since the new year. If the report had come out last year when the party was in a much more fractious mood, the impact could have been much worse, and it could have been seized upon by Mr Major's critics. As it is, the report looks like battering the structure but leaving it more or less intact.



ROUND ONE

The Government is not yet Scott-free

Ian Lang picked his way through the Scott report with the aplomb of one who had a map of the minefield that others, Opposition and press, could not yet have mastered. That advantage will not last for long. Sir Richard found ministers to have acted like fools. He did not, crucially, conclude that they were knaves. No individual will be off the hook for some time yet. On the substance of policy (lest it be forgotten in the future), Sir Richard concludes unequivocally that the policy on exports to Iraq did change in 1988, and that this change should have been drawn to the attention of Parliament.

Lawyers can, and doubtless will, have a field day with the report's contention that in law, ministers were wrongly advised to sign public interest immunity certificates in the Matrix Churchill case. Certainly, the conduct of government over the Matrix Churchill trial comes in for some trenchant criticism. Ministers were advised both by Treasury lawyers and by the Attorney-General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, that they had a duty to sign public interest immunity (PII) certificates covering documents that would have been useful to the defence. Michael Heseltine believed that these documents ought to be disclosed. He demanded that his PII express his reservations and asked that they be passed on to the prosecution.

Sir Nicholas, Sir Richard argues, was wrong in principle and in practice: ministers are not under a duty to sign PII certificates, particularly in a criminal trial, if they believe that the public interest requires disclosure. Sir Richard writes, "the view of the law on which the making of the PII class claims in the Matrix Churchill case was based was unsound". The Attorney-General's advice was "based on a fundamental misconception of the principles of PII law".

Sir Nicholas is also found guilty of failing to ensure that Mr Heseltine's reservations were passed on. Here Sir Richard is categorical: "I do not accept that he was not personally at fault... I would have expected him to recognise that important constitutional and legal issues were raised by Mr Heseltine's stand and to have ensured that Mr Moses... was adequately instructed."

For the Government's most senior law officer to be accused of such mistakes is no cause for confidence. Combined with his failure to ensure that Mr Heseltine's anxieties were communicated, it must seem that the avoidance of political embarrassment was given precedence over the interests of justice.

For the Government as a whole, the most

damning sentence is in the conclusion. There was, he says, "a consistent undervaluing by Government of the public interest that full information should be made available to Parliament". Time and again, the Government "failed to discharge the obligations imposed by the constitutional principle of Ministerial accountability" — a failure which "undermines, in my opinion, the democratic process".

The core of the Government's defence, and the source of its relief, is that Sir Richard does clear ministers of "duplicitous intention". He was prepared to accept that ministers believed, however mistakenly, that "they were avoiding a formal change to the guidelines" announced in 1985 on exports to Iran and Iraq policy. They believed the relaxed interpretation of the guidelines, with respect to Iraq, to be "a justifiable use of the flexibility believed to be inherent in the guidelines".

In consequence, although he finds that information given by William Waldegrave, the minister whose career has been most centrally in question, "was apt to mislead" and that he "was in a position to know that this was so", he accepts that he did not intend his letters and answers to Parliamentary Questions "to be misleading and did not so regard them". The duplicity, he writes, lay in "the flexibility claimed for the guidelines". Crucially not only for Mr Waldegrave but for the Government, the report concludes that had he known that the machine tools exported to Iraq were for military use, "he would not have given way".

Labour had a difficult time yesterday. Its central accusations — that ministers conspired to mislead Parliament, that they operated a cover-up by "gagging orders" in the Matrix Churchill case and that Mr Waldegrave was as complicitous as Alan Clark in nods and winks that let exports with military uses reach Iraq — do not on an initial reading appear to stand. Dishonesty, however, is not the only issue. In page after page, ministers and officials are charged with incompetence and, even more damagingly, with a cavalier attitude to accountability.

This is where, in the longer term, the Scott report is likely to be judged most important and most disappointing. The report reads like more like a lawyer's brief than a guide to better government. Its recommendations are disappointingly narrow and technical. The light shone into Whitehall has revealed many murky corridors, but it has not supplied, let alone applied the broom.

YELTSIN AGAIN

A two-horse field for the Russian leadership stakes

From the moment that he emerged from hospital last November, it was clear that President Yeltsin would seek a second term. Yesterday he confirmed that speculation, announcing that he had a duty to "consolidate all healthy forces and prevent shocks that could lead to civil war." Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist leader, also announced that he would run, to prevent "the destruction of our country". Despite the plethora of other potential candidates, including Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the June election should be a straight fight between the two men.

Since Mr Yeltsin was elected in 1991, Russia has experienced change. Market reform, which first spurred ahead, has sputtered under Viktor Chernomyrdin. But it has left the bulk of the economy in private hands. Political pluralism is now so entrenched that even the Communists do not demand a return to the monolith of power. Prices have been freed and most subsidies abolished. The currency is convertible within Russia and inflation tamed. The press, though often intimidated, remains outspoken.

All these are achievements: but they are not irreversible. Too few reforms have been codified. Criminality has spread into every reach of life, and private enterprise is too entangled with crime. Monetary stability is threatened by the lack of fiscal discipline, and Mr Yeltsin is still too ready to buy social peace by printing money and handing out wage increases to miners, pensioners and

others. Mr Zyuganov may not lead his country back to Stalinism, but he could halt the change and revive the old ways of political intimidation.

There are many reasons why Mr Yeltsin does not deserve a second term. His health is so poor that, like Brezhnev, he is now virtually a prisoner of his doctors and self-seeking Kremlin aides. He has made spectacular miscalculations, notably in Chechnya, and is trying to exonerate himself by pandering to nationalists while blaming underlings. He has retreated so far from reform that he is no longer a real advocate of the unfinished revolution. And by running again, he perpetuates the example of a Kremlin politician unable to leave office gracefully.

And yet Mr Yeltsin remains the only man nominally committed to a post-communist order who has any chance of success. He has appointed men, such as his Foreign Minister, who may hark back to nationalist communism, but who so far have co-operated soberly with the West. He is, at heart, a democrat, however bearish his behaviour. The West has learnt to do business with him. Yet it would be wrong to count on his return: Western politicians must work with whom-ever is elected. Open backing for Mr Yeltsin may indeed be counter-productive in this nationalist age. But, *faut de mieux*, if it is a choice of Yeltsin or Zyuganov, the West has no difficulty in making its preference clear.

FLOREAT SERENA

Amateurism in the pursuit of villains is no vice

It is the footfall of Gucci rather than the thrud of Plod's size thirteens on Brighton's lanes that now strikes fear among the town's villains. Serena Soames has put the constabulary to shame with her DIY detective work.

The wife of the Armed Forces Minister Nicholas tracked down valuables burgled from her home and fenced to Lovejoys. Her success is proof that the great English writers of detective fiction are right. In a world of DNA fingerprinting and electronic surveillance the best way to catch a crook is still to engage an amateur sleuth.

Since Sherlock Holmes first doffed his deerstalker to Lestrade of the Yard it has been the private eye who has had the edge over the State's men. Lord Peter Wimsey and Harriet Vane, in their urbanity almost the equals of Nicholas and Serena Soames, bagged a better clean-up rate than the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad. Miss Marple dealt with suspicious deaths in St Mary Mead — which gave the village a higher murder rate than downtown LA — without so much as dropping a stitch. Hercule Poirot and Albert Campton struck fear into the black hearts of any country

house killer. Now the mention of Serena Soames's name should induce a tremble in the fingers of any country house burglar.

Amateurism goes hand in hand with the apprehension of criminals that elude the professionals of Scotland Yard. Father Brown's insights into men's immortal souls yielded better clues than the imprints of their perishable soles. A practised huntswoman, Mrs Soames brought the virtues of the hunting field to the pursuit of her cherished oak bootjack. Determination, a love of the chase and a willingness to carry on when the trail went cold helped the countrywoman sniff out the swag the urban force failed to find. What better school of character can there be than the saddle, what better teacher of persistence than wily Reynard?

Puddy-duddies argue that leaving law and order to the layman encourages the vigilante, but Mrs Soames's success proves you should not look at a gifted horsewoman in the mouth. The first place in the fight against crime must go to the police, but room should still be made for the gifted amateur. The British always prefer gentlemen to players, especially when the gentlemen are ladies.

Maternity as free service on NHS

From Dr Paul Crawford Walker

Sir, I was amazed to read your report today that an unnamed health authority has, apparently, agreed to fund a surrogate pregnancy from the public purse.

As a former Director of Public Health, responsible for advising my own health authority what health services it should purchase under the then new internal market arrangements in the NHS, I advised in 1992 that it should not purchase so-called assisted conception procedures such as IVF and GIFT. The grounds were that these procedures were expensive and did not confer any measurable health benefits.

The same arguments can be applied with even greater force to surrogate pregnancy. They could also, it should be noted, be applied to natural pregnancy, leading to the obvious question of why should the NHS provide free maternity care?

It is possible, I believe, to argue that health is a fundamental human right and that therefore a civilised society should protect, promote and restore it as a publicly financed collective good. There is of course the corresponding duty on individuals to do all they reasonably can to protect, promote and restore their own health. I do not consider, however, that having children is a fundamental human right requiring an equivalent collective response.

In fifty years time we will look upon the notion that having children is such a right with the same puzzlement with which we now regard the view, once enshrined in law, that wives were merely chattels.

In the meantime, we must make a start somewhere to promote this new enlightened ethical framework. Denying publicly funded surrogate pregnancy seems as good a place as any.

Yours sincerely,

P. C. WALKER

(Director of Public Health, North West Health Authority, 1989-93), 8 Church Avenue, Sneyd Park, Bristol, Avon, February 13.

Medicine and therapy

From Dr Alastair J. Baker

Sir, I read with interest and concern your article on an infant suffering neonatal jaundice whose parents believe her to have been cured by Chinese medicine ("Little Amber's Chinese cure", *Body and Mind*, February 6; see also letters, February 8, 13).

As one of the team of paediatric hepatologists responsible for the investigation and care of the child in question I know that the management of her case was along lines which would be regarded as conventional in any centre practising modern medicine throughout the world.

No sensible doctor would dismiss out of hand the potential pharmacological value of any type of treatment, including Chinese medicine; however, the value of such treatment can only be accepted once it has been subjected to properly designed scientific scrutiny. No Chinese herb or medicine has been proven to have any beneficial effect whatsoever on any form of neonatal jaundice. The potential toxicity of such medicine is widely recognised and its risks must be considerably greater in newborn children.

Any parent who seeks management of an infant with jaundice by Chinese medicine to the exclusion of conventional medical care, takes a very grave risk with the life and wellbeing of the child.

Yours faithfully,
A. J. BAKER
(Consultant Paediatric Hepatologist), King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, SE5.

From Mr D. L. Crosby

Sir, Doubtless large numbers of people claim to feel better after indulging in aromatherapy, reflexology and similar pursuits, as your leading article ("The healing touch", February 5) indicates: but does this mean that these should be provided free? Obviously those who wish to pay for such activities should not be discouraged from doing so.

Quite rightly, it is now perceived that all NHS provision should be scrutinised for efficiency and safety. It is certainly not time to give carte blanche to a whole host of nebulous therapies which have not passed similar tests.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID CROSBY (Chairman), Cardiff Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Trenewydd, Fairwater Road, Llandaff, Cardiff 5.

Cricket dilemma

From Mr Jim Dutton

Sir, The dilemma facing the cricket authorities over the World Cup fixtures scheduled for Colombo (report, Sport, February 13; see also letters, February 7, 8) is in stark contrast to a somewhat similar crisis 27 years ago.

In January 1969 I had occasion as Acting High Commissioner to entertain to dinner some members of the MCC party visiting Ceylon (as it then was) in preparation for a Test series in Pakistan. Colin Cowdrey was the MCC captain and no doubt remembers the occasion.

After the meal we listened to a modest portable radio on which it was just possible to hear that serious rioting

Lords reform: the barbarians are not yet at the gate

From Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, OM

Sir, The reform of the House of Lords (letters, February 9 and 13) is and has long been a difficult and elusive matter. It can be argued that, even as at present constituted, the second chamber exhibits more signs of both health and independence as a constitutional organ than does today's House of Commons.

It is however marred not merely by logical indefensibility (which should not be given too much weight) but by the dreary willingness of a big reserve tank of hereditary Conservatives to allow themselves to be from time to time whipped against wisdom, as with the poll tax, or in favour of some of Mr Michael Howard's knee-jerk proposals.

It will nonetheless require an unusual deadliness of aim to produce a new chamber which combines the virtues of the old with a new political fairness without making it the biggest of all quangos.

Despite these qualifications, what I find nonsensical is the attempt by the Government and others to portray proposals to restrain the right to sit and vote of hereditary peers as a constitutional monstrosity, a sign of barbarians at the gate, and an undermining of the defences of the monarchy. This is typical of the unhistorical ignorance which characterises so much government thought, from the Prime Minister downwards.

Right to silence

From Mr Piers Ashworth, QC

Sir, Some sections of the media are eager to portray decisions of the European Court of Human Rights as decisions for British justice. Those decisions which uphold British law sometimes receive less attention. Such was the *Murray v United Kingdom* case ("Republican wins £15,000 from human rights court", also Law Report, February 9).

It is true that the court held that denial of access to a solicitor for 48 hours was a breach of the Convention, and this was the part of the decision highlighted in the media.

But this was a minor element in the judgment: indeed on the facts of the case it was almost an irrelevance as the applicant had maintained his silence both before and after access to a solicitor, and the court awarded no compensation (and only about one quarter of his costs).

The important element of the decision was that the court upheld the right of a judge or jury to draw adverse inferences from an accused's silence in situations which clearly called

I cite six occasions in this century:

1. In 1907 Lord Newton, a prominent Conservative peer, brought forward a proposal which involved eliminating three quarters of the hereditary peers from the House of Lords. It was supported by the Dukes of Devonshire and Northumberland and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

2. In 1910 Lord Rosebery (never nominally a Conservative, but already so far to the right as to make Sir John Simon, a leading Liberal of the next generation, appear a flaming radical) proposed a measure of reform of which "a necessary preliminary" was that "the possession of a peerage should no longer of itself give the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords".

3. In 1911 Lord Lansdowne, the Conservative Leader in the Lords, moved a Bill to restrict the number of hereditaries to 150 (in a House of 350), elected by the others from specified categories which included ex-Ministers, former viceroys, governors, high commissioners, ambassadors, and privy counsellors. This seems to me remarkably close to the likely outcome of what is currently proposed.

4. In the Parliament Act of that year the preamble stated the intention "to substitute for the House of Lords as it at present exists a Second Chamber constituted on a popular instead of a hereditary basis".

5. In 1933, this preamble having remained an aspiration, that notable re-

volutionary, the fourth Marquess of Salisbury, brought forward another plan to reduce the number of hereditaries to 150.

6. In 1967-68 Lords Carrington and Jellicoe (Conservative Leader and Deputy Leader in the Lords), together with Iain Macleod, agreed to an all-party scheme by which existing hereditaries would lose their right to sit, and their successors the right to sit. Only the unholy alliance of Michael Foot and Enoch Powell prevented this scheme becoming law.

This long chronicle may on the one hand be taken as an illustration of how reforming the Lords is as difficult as grasping an eel; on the other it exposes the force of the modern Conservative Party treating the invasion of the hereditary principle as a dastardly degradation.

I find it increasingly difficult to understand the curious dichotomy by which that party on the one hand threatens so many established institutions which work well, from HMSO to the Post Office to Civil Service recruitment, and on the other gathers up its skirts in horror at any change in our constitutional arrangements, which on the whole have come to work badly.

Yours faithfully,
ROY JENKINS,
House of Lords,
February 13.

Questions of race

From Mrs Rosemary Charles

Sir, When news of trouble attributed to race starts coming from supposedly tranquil Somerset (report, February 6) perhaps we should consider where such divisions originate.

I have recently been asked to state my ethnic origin (I have refused) when applying for an office job, joining an adult education day-class and — unbelievably — by the Guide Association. I would suggest that only qualifications and experience are relevant in the first case, the ability to pay in the second, and willingness to give time and commitment in the third. Although one could argue about further details, the place of birth of my ancestors is, or should be, irrelevant.

The organisations demanding this information are doing nothing but increase division by giving it some sort of official validation.

Yours faithfully,
R. E. CHARLES,
6 Brideswell Street,
Wymondham, Norfolk.

Convoy lore

From Commodore Paul Branscombe, RN

Sir, I have been pondering Chancellor Kohl's analogy of a convoy (letters, February 7 and 9) and the general lessons that might be drawn from it for the European Community.

It was a deeply reactionary and prejudiced Admiralty which initially opposed convoys; proponents represented more dynamic naval thinking, backed by scientific analysis.

The convoy's speed was not itself the key. It was the ability to concentrate scarce escort vessels that proved decisive. Even then, complete safety was not assured — serious losses still occurred in the body of the convoy as well as at stragglers.

Furthermore, the tragic scattering in 1942 of the Arctic convoy, PQ17, demonstrated the catastrophic result of panic decisions by top leadership in isolation.

Euroscopics may like to recall that large liners, most of them proudly bearing royal names and America-bound, sailed alone at top speed and almost always went unscathed.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL BRANSCOMBE,
Ministry of Defence,
Quay House,
The Ambury, Bath, Avon.

Floral tributes

From Mrs Rosemary Stevens

Sir, I would rather my nearest and dearest give me flowers while I am alive and able to enjoy them (letters, February 1, 8, 9, 15). On the occasions when I have visited my local crematorium and seen the masses of flowers laid out by the undertakers, I have wondered whether the recently departed had ever received such beautiful flowers during their lifetimes.

Yours sincerely,
ROSEMARY STEVENS,
48 Thurlstone Road,
Ruislip, Middlesex,
February 9.

Many thanks

From Mrs Helen Corkery

Sir, Better late than never, a letter arrived this morning from a five-year-old, thanking me for a lovely Christmas present and wishing me a Happy New Year. Remembering that a round of thank-you letters is a hard task for the young I was much impressed.

Later I realised that it was a photocopy with my name added in pencil.

Yours faithfully,
HELEN CORKERY,
52 Harrison Close,
Woodlands, Reigate, Surrey.

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Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

child labour results in lack of education and stunted physical and mental growth, which in turn lead to unemployment in adulthood.

This vicious circle is the reason why SACCs is promoting the Rugmark labels on exported Indian carpets. Contrary to the impression given in your report, we believe that the scheme can make a significant contribution to ending the abuse of child labour in the carpet industry and that it points the way to reducing child exploitation elsewhere.

Yours faithfully,
KEVAN BUNDELL
(Senior Programme Officer, South Asia Team),
Christian Aid,
PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT,
February 7.

Yours truly,
JIM DUTTON,
Cockhurst,
Tyrrells Wood, Leatherhead, Surrey,
February 13.



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